



"THOSE WERE THE DAYS"
in
SWIFT CURRENT

BY
JIM GREENBLAT

A SASKATCHEWAN '71 HOMECOMING EVENT"
50 YEARS OF REMINISCENCE OF THE FRONTIER
CITY AND DISTRICT

"Those Were The Days"
in
Swift Current

JIM GREENBLAT

Printed by Modern Press
Saskatoon



Dedication

This book of reminiscences is dedicated with deep sincerity to the pioneers and early residents of Swift Current and the district. They all helped to build from a raw, dusty prairie spot along the Swift Current Creek, the progressive place known as Saskatchewan's "Frontier City". It has a great history and a great future.

It was a wonderful experience to have lived among them. I know it's impossible, but I would love to be able to relive those days again.

These people of whom I wrote, lived, loved, worked, laughed and wept through the many years of Swift Current's coming to maturity as a wonderful place to call "home".

Few of them were affluent. It didn't take affluence to achieve what they did. It took guts, humility, understanding, character—and most of the Ten Commandments.

Jim Greenblat

No Lights, No Nothing

A large number of present day Currentonians, now numbering over 16,000, I'm positive know only a little bit about the pioneer folks who inhabited the little old frontier community of Swift Current before and after the turn of this century. The Sun has, over the years, turned out some worthwhile Old Timers editions which gave geographic and physical data about the pioneer days. This has been history worth recording. But in general there has been little dealing with the genesis of this generation; about the wonderful people who walked the streets and the byways of the district surrounding; those who lived, loved, worked, built and prospered here and started what we have today.

Swift Current at the turn of the century was a place of characters, but not in the derogatory sense. The men and women who built the first homes and businesses in the then frontier village were of a breed the likes of which will never be seen again. They came from all over the continent—and the globe, and of diverse antecedents.

I had the opportunity from boyhood to manhood, and as a journalist of local flavor, to know many of them intimately. They were tough; had to be. But for all that they were among the most gentle human beings I have ever met or associated with. Their creed mostly was "thy neighbor is thy brother". These were the people I want to write about, so that the New Frontier City will know at least something about its heritage.

Thus, the following series of columns in The Sun will be a prologue to the story of today's affluent and modern city of Swift Current. Mostly I will reminisce about the folks who stirred my imagination as a youngster and young adult. The story may be sketchy and jump from here to there, but the old days in Swift Current were just like that, a human pot-pourri.

If I mention that I used to peep into the long mahogany-like bar in the Imperial hotel, or the old Reliance just west of there on Railway street, or the Alexandra and watch staid citizens hoisting one, it's not in a derogatory sense. Thousands of us nowadays take a social drink. I'd probably see bellied up to the bar, one foot on the shining brass rail, fellows like Sergeant Bottley of the Royal North West Mounted Police, the biggest hunk of a man you ever saw in your life, absolutely awe inspiring, with his florid face and big mustache; or big Bill Sanders, face and beard like King Edward VII, ex-Mountie turned butcher, across from the CPR depot, whose son John, a classmate of mine, was first announcer of the rodeo at our Frontier Days; or it could be Charlie Reid, ex-rancher, who came here in the early 1890s and built his second store which is now Christie Grants. He used to ship buffalo bones to Eastern Canada.

Yes, folks, the 18th fairway at Elmwood Golf club used to be called "The Wallows" because there were indentations in the ground which were once actual buffalo wallows; I played over 'em plenty. Or I might have watched editor Sam Moore of The Sun, (whom I succeeded) and who had bought controlling interest in the paper in 1908. It was then being published over Charlie Reid's store. Anyway, let's get on with the story.

1910—This Is My New Home?

It was a gusty, raw Sunday morning in March, 1910, some 60 years ago, when this young lad, just off the train from Winnipeg, started up 11th avenue (now Central) for a look at the place he was to call home for 51 years. There wasn't much to look at.

I headed up towards North Hill and looked down at the one real business street, the scattered shacks and homes. Hot tears welled down my cheeks. There was hardly a soul in sight. Prairie, dull, brown with patches of snow everywhere, receding into the grey distance. After all, in Winnipeg there were street cars, electric lights, friends, well dressed people on the streets, ladies with skirts down to their ankles.

Not a single automobile was in sight; those new-fangled machines which scared the hell out of horses. There was a guy on horseback coming over the brow of the hill from what I was to know as the old Battleford Trail not too long ago whispering to the shuffle of moccasins; then a democrat with four people in it headed for church in town. That was all.

Nothing so strange about this-to-me strange scene. After all, this particular Sunday was only a mere 25 years away from the Riel Rebellion, during which Swift Current was the rail head and jumping off place for the Canadian militia under Colonel Otter and General Middleton. From here they forced marched across the plains, ferried over the South Saskatchewan river at Saskatchewan Landing and on to Battleford for fighting at Batoche, Duck Lake and other memorable places, against the Indians and Métis, who had been incited by Louis Riel and fellows like Gabriel Dumont.

As I looked southward from the hill (across from the railway station and west of there), I could see a veritable lake of water not far from the elevators in the west end. Here the resting soldiers had unloosed their Gatling gun, a then new instrument for killing, and had amused themselves shooting at thousands and thousands of geese and ducks which blackened the skies.

I could look down and see, just south of the depot and telegraph office, scores of box cars on a siding, disgorging settlers effects, piled high everywhere on the ground. The migration of settlers, Americans from many Western States, the Norwegians and Swedes from Minnesota and the Dakotas coming to the promised land to take up homesteads. They were forerunners for the transition from a ranching country to wheat farming, to make Swift Current district best known at one time as "The Breadbasket of the World".

Cowboys and Everything

This Sunday in March, 1910, was a mere 27 years from the reaching of the Canadian Pacific rails to Swift Current; partway on the long arduous building of a railway to join the Atlantic to the Pacific oceans for a united Canada; long a dream of Sir John A. Macdonald and the Fathers of Confederation. The history of Swift Current had actually just commenced. Little did I realize that Sunday morning I was to become part of that history.

Swift Current's history can be divided into three parts. First, the centuries that roving bands of Indians had inhabited on and off, the valley of Swift Current creek which was fed by streams flowing from the Cypress Hills not

far from Maple Creek. This creek emptied into the South Saskatchewan River; Pelletier Creek into Swift Current Creek. This had been favorite hunting and fishing grounds for Crees, Chippewyans, Blackfoot, Sioux, Assiniboines and Salteaux. The smoke of their campfires was first seen it is said, around 1860, by some white men, mostly traders. It is recorded that on an August evening in 1874, the North West Mounted Police, on their famous march from the Red River to the Rockies were first seen along the Swift Current Creek. It may be, as they rested, they saw the Indians, somewhere along where the Union Hospital now is. As a matter of fact from North Hill, I could look across eastward and see quite a few sod shacks presumably built by Indians. So, 1910 wasn't too far removed from 1874.

The Indian nomenclature for "Swift Flowing" was Saskatchewan, so the small creek flowing through our city was renamed by the white men "Riviere au Courant" or Swift Current.

Orphaned at an fairly early age in Winnipeg, I had come to Swift Current to join a guardian uncle, Philip Silver, who had just opened a general store north of where Shogans Drug Store now is. The Mennonites had—not too long before—started a farming colony south of town around where Wymark is. The colony was similar to Mennonite colonies which had been established in Manitoba before 1900, nearby the village of Winkler, where I was born. My uncle (as my father had done in Winkler at the turn of the century) traded with the Mennonites, a very religious but mostly kindly and circumspect people. They had fled religious and military service persecution in Russia. My father had come to Canada for the same reason in the 1890s.

Just south of the Silver Store, where McIntosh's Furniture now is located, was Quittenbaums store. The Quittenbaums had also come originally from Winkler, Man. so that took a little of my initial loneliness away.

On the north side was O. B. Dreyer's first funeral place. O. B. was a handsome guy, wore nice cut black clothes and long sideburns. He was a most eligible bachelor for some time. Then later there was Fownes and Grant's first jewelry store (they succeeded Christie Doonan's jewelry). Here I spent hours listening to the long-horned first gramophones disgorge the voices of Caruso, McCormick and Tetrizzini.

A common sight in winter and spring used to be the Mounties bringing in on sleighs frozen corpses of many a lonely homesteader who had perished during those terrible blizzards they used to have in the early days in our country. No electric lights, no telephones, no nothing, only harsh solitude and hard work and many times tragedy.

North of that was the Weekly News, opposition to The Sun, and it wasn't too long after I came that a daily newspaper, The Daily Express, was started and had a sad demise. Three papers at one time in a raw frontier town.

Eleventh avenue (Central ave.) wasn't too much to admire in 1910. But the second phase of Swift Current's history had begun with the advent of the agricultural settler, and the sleepy old town took on an air of pandemonium. Buildings were arising like mushrooms, stores were opening, lumber yards thriving, real estate was going like hotcakes and the bucks were being made wholesale. Central avenue had sidewalks, but they were wooden-platforms built high enough so that the mud on rainy days didn't slop over on pedestrians from horse's hooves—which it did anyways.

Our Mennonite Neighbors

The busiest place in town in 1910 was the Imperial, first hotel in town, built in 1903. The town's population had jumped from around 800 in 1907 to around 3,000 give or take a few hundred, in 1910. George Webster owned the hotel, a gentle, genial soul, who with his wife Emily, saw to it that cow-punchers and settlers alike were well bedded down and fed. In the lobby, I remember, one wall had an original oil painting of Indians on the war prowl, which must have been 15 feet by around seven feet. I always stared at it goggled-eyed. There were some stores in the north end of the hotel along 11th avenue. One was occupied by the then Mayor, A. W. Snider, a bald-headed, spectacled gent with a big mustache.

He served in that capacity for four years, until the end of 1912. He was in real estate and he and his wife made valiant efforts to improve the culture of the town, aesthetically.

Next busiest place, of course, was the Argue & Cooper store across the street on 11th. They had been in business on Railway street across from the depot, later moved to 11th. Later Bill bought out his brother-in-law Ira Argue, and subsequently until taken over by Pioneer Co-op, this store was the shopping centre of Swift Current through the years.

Homesteaders and settlers of all types used to come to load up with provisions at Coopers from over a hundred miles away with wagons often drawn by oxen. Swift Current, a divisional point on the CPR, was the only "big" centre between Regina and Moose Jaw to the U.S.A. border south and Saskatoon, 182 miles north and west to Medicine Hat.

The Mennonites had a peculiar affinity for Bill Cooper. A very tall, handsome figure of a man, always in a smart blue serge suit, he was the constant *maitre d'* at the store. He knew every customer by first name, could flatter the ladies elegantly and kept in touch with every phase of the business. But the Mennonites, they loved him and most of them shopped there.

I've seen the plank sidewalk in front of Cooper's filled with head-shawled Mennonite ladies and men squatting down and munching sunflower seeds and spitting them out on the sidewalk while they gossiped. There was nothing strange in this.

I've seen exuberant cowboys gallop into town just like in the old Western movies; from the Turkey Track or other big ranch spreads, yipping and hollering until they reached the Imperial, or the Reliance or the Alexandra hotels, eager to get tanked up. And sometimes on a Saturday night some high cow-poke would try to ride his cayuse right into the Imperial lobby. No kidding, those were wild and wooly days in Swift Current, but normal for the day and age.

It really wasn't until around 1912 when things settled down. Folks started to take stock of the town and to try and build on a permanent basis, economic, physically and culturally.

The first town band was organized in 1910. In looking at a photograph of that band I note Bill Stephenson (he came to Swift Current as a harness maker), who organized in later years the famous Cabri Band and from which came the Cabri Boys Band. This had as one of its members a fellow called Bobby Gimby. He was a charter member of the well known radio "Happy Gang", and the man who wrote that catchy tune, "Canada" for the recent

Canada Centennial. Bobby one time was a regular at Swift Current music festivals.

In 1910, near where the Metropolitan Store is, was a down stairs eating joint run by a giant Negro gentleman, whose first name as I recollect was Sam. His claim to fame was that when challenged on a bet by the town sports he consumed three dozen fried eggs at one sitting.

Where the Healy Booker Block stands was another of Swift Current's big businesses, the Great Northern hardware store. When it burned to the ground in 1911 it was one of the most spectacular fires in our history.

I got to tell this one about the late Cy Grant, whose jewelry store was next to my uncle's place from where I delivered groceries for my uncle on a little handcart.

I used to see either he or Joe Fownes slip out their back door to the back door of the undertaking place. Joe told me that Cy once went into O.B.'s to chat with him. Maybe they sipped one, I don't know, but anyhow, the Mounties had brought in a homesteader found frozen stiff after a blizzard. O. B. had propped him against the wall to thaw out.

Anyway at one juncture, as they were talking, there was a whoosh, the corpse bent forward and fell nearly into Cy's lap. They said Cy made one jump for the door and dashed out in wild disorder. No radio, no television, no nothing. So these are the kind of stories folks laughed at in 1910. When I came back from World War I, an adult, and became a close friend, and golf partner of Cy and Joe, I once asked Cy if it was true and he just laughed.

The Early School Days

The third phase of Swift Current history probably should encompass from about 1914 on and take in as well Two World Wars, in which many of the earlier-day folk played a part.

But there's still plenty to write about of the second phase. And what better than something about school days, and the evolution of education in Swift Current. School days were my impressionable days, and wonderful days in a town where everybody knew everybody else.

They were good days when I first knew the Frontier City. As far away as the astronauts were such things as dissent, protest, long hair, whiskers and beads on kids, marijuana, booze, cancer from cigarettes, permissiveness and glue sniffing. Pregnancy was a word polite people didn't use in public. And when a youngster or adult passed a lady on the street wearing an ankle-length skirt, one didn't whistle; one tipped one's hat to a lady. That practice didn't go out of style till well into the 20's.

Anyway, when I look around at the magnificent public and high schools in Swift Current today, I can't seem to realize that back in 1910 the only schools were a couple of shack type places at the corner of Second west and Cheadle. Within a year or so, of course, the cement two-storey block school was built, for those days an edifice worth boasting about.

I can still smell the peculiar odor of that school, so help me! It's still used as a collegiate annex. One time there was even a town jail fashioned in the basement at that school, in which one person perished by fire.

Kitty-corner across the street was a Chinese laundry and Ulyett's photograph studio. The only time I ever got the strap from the principal, our beloved "Prof" Nelson Latour, was for breaking a window in this laundry. It was together this deed was done, with Jack McTaggart, scion of a pioneer farm family north of Swift Current, who had a house across from the school later. Mr. McTaggart's original homestead was once part of the townsite of Swift Current, around where the flour mill is on Railway street east.

By the way, this "Prof" Latour was without doubt the most beloved and respected of teachers ever in Swift Current, and that's not downgrading fellows like Des Brisay, Lewis and Aberdeen who have in later years earned similar enconiums. I don't know of a single boy taught by Mr. Latour who ever became a dilinquent. He was a great coach in hockey, baseball, rugby, etc., and my love of sports through the years can be attributed to him.

He was a stickler for discipline. The kind of discipline with love which seems to be so lacking these days.

Once Bob Moore and I visited former baseball and hockey associates on Swift Current teams, "Young" Joe and Jack Dempsey in Chicago where they became millionaire investment bankers. At one time they were the next biggest stockholders to William Wrigley in the Chicago Cubs baseball club, and were in a consortium attempting to buy the club but couldn't. And who did they remember most kindly of their Swift Current days? Prof. Latour, who they said had such an influence on their lives.

Their dad, "Old" Joe Dempsey for years operated the billiard parlors and smoke shop in the Alexandra hotel; another grand old timer.

Prof. married Charlie Reid's daughter, Winnie, adding the name Reid to his own. Later he became Saskatchewan's deputy minister of education. They had two sons, now dentists in Prince Albert and Regina and both champion golfers.

By the way, I remember before Elmwood School was built in 1914, they had to exhume the bodies from the cemetery which was located right there, and rebury them at the new cemetery up on North Hill.

I think it was George Warren, Charlie Warren's father, who superintended the job if I remember right. He was with W.S. Yule, whose funeral parlor was at corner of Central and Chaplin where the Sask. Power building now is. Originally the place housed the Unique Theatre where we saw the first movies of Charlie Chaplin at 15-cents a head.

Kitty-corner from there on the west side of Central in the earlier days was the Marlow Lumber Co. and we used to see Bill Marlow, Ralph's dad, sitting outside in front on the sidewalk on sunny days smoking his vast curved pipe. Bill was a kindly man and liked to have the kids stop and chat with him.

The Kids I Knew at School

Swift Current history stares out at me as I look at an old photo of a classroom taken around maybe 1912. I counted 28 in the seats in the room in the cement block school. That I guess was the entire high school population of Swift Current. In a back seat I notice Martha Gregory. She's now Mrs.

Bill Miller, living not too far from me in Vancouver. She is a daughter of the late Hilliard Gregory, that pint-sized gentleman who came to Swift Current from Winnipeg in 1883, just when the railway reached the town. He was married to the daughter of a Hudsons Bay factor and ain't that history. They raised a family of four, Belle the other daughter, the late Fred, Joe in Calgary. The latter two were heroes of the Dieppe raid in World War II and Joe was decorated for bravery there.

But Hill Gregory is worth some space in our history. He ran one of the earliest stores, on Railway street, and he became one of the very few white men the Indians trusted. He was good to them when they came in to trade. With the Indians and Métis uprising in 1885, a group of meandering Crees and Chippewyans decided they would massacre the inhabitants of the tiny frontier post of Swift Current, all of them except Hill Gregory. They got into quite a dispute while planning the wholesale murder. Hill heard about it and finally prevailed on them to get out of town. He was one of the kindest of human beings. I had great admiration for him, and listened to him often tell stories of the Indian days.

Yes, sitting around me in that classroom were the progeny of many of the pioneers of Swift Current. There was Gordon Buttery, whose folks pioneered at Herbert, later became a practising dentist in Drumheller and then Swift Current. There was Leslie Moote, whose dad started the Moote Coal Co. In later years Les, who was an excellent hockey and ball player on our school teams, got to the Philippines, became advertising manager of the Manila Bulletin. A U.S. Navy reservist, he was captured by the Japanese in World War II and died on a Japanese prison ship. After the war his wife and daughter came to visit us in Swift Current.

There was Estelle Maher, still a resident of the city. Her dad, John Maher and O'Connor built the Magic Theatre on First east back in 1909, then in '12 the Prince Royal, one of the most modern theatres of that era in Western Canada, later sold to the Elks. It had an up and down movable floor for dances and shows. Some of the finest actors and vaudevillians of that era came to Swift Current to perform. It was a far cry from Swift Current's first theatre as such, the old stone one storey barnlike edifice situated behind Cooper's store on First East, facing east. Here in the earlier days we saw such travelling groups as the Boston Bloomer Girls, magicians and hypnotists by the dozen. Even magic lantern shows.

Then of course came the Eagle Theatre, north of Coopers on 11th avenue (Central, don't forget), now a drugstore. The Leach family ran the theatre, later owned by Mike Healy and Jack Lundholm. Talking about John Maher, he was an American and an exact duplicate in height, features, etc., of Abraham Lincoln. A son, Leo, later also in the theatre business in Medicine Hat was in our class too. My first fist fight at school was with him.

In the high school class were Jennie and Glen Morrison. Their father Angus operated the CPR pumphouse across the tracks at the dam. Our fun winter nights when not playing hockey, was to get the girls and skate all the way along the creek to Fenton's Grove and have a bonfire. And there was Floss Gardiner and Esther Kruse of the Kruses who came from the States and farmed north of Swift Current. Among the boys was Welly Hutchinson, a crack hockey player, of the Hutchinson family which came here with the

railway. A brother, Mahlon, became one of my partners in The Sun in later years. There was Weir and Frank Edmondson, Ontarians, whose father came to Swift Current to run a butcher business corner of Cheadle and First East. Last I heard of Weir he was with the Income Tax in Winnipeg.

Just a diversion from my classmates. After four, if you didn't have any chores to do, the kids could always meander over from the school yard one block to First East, where there was a big corral just north of where the Healy Hotel is. Just a big empty spot then. You could see homesteaders wagons by the dozen, with oxen, parked here. They had trekked in for provisions, some from a hundred miles away.

We kids could sit on the corral fence and watch the tough cowpunchers break pesky broncos. This was real, exciting fun. On the east side from the corral one could wander into Gus Riedler's blacksmith shop and watch him shoeing horses.

Gus, an American, was a roly poly, wonderful natured guy with an infectious laugh. He was a great baseball catcher, and we played on teams with him in later years. He had a face like Santa Claus without whiskers. Gus could drink a quart jug of water in one gulp and he usually drank near a gallon at every meal. South of Gus's was Bill Brunyee's livery barn, from which one could use the beautiful brougham he imported and which served as the town's taxi cab, with fine prancing horses always pulling it. But more about Bill Brunyee later. His story is something to tell about, too.

Yates, He Was Some Guy

After the turn of the century Swift Current was a mecca for a number of "remittance men" from the Old Country; scions of wealthy titled people over for the adventure mainly. Colonel Milwarde Yates was a fantastic character of those days. I knew him well. He is still living in Victoria at 92, blind, but as volatile and perky as ever (1969).

Tall, handsome, blond, life was just one big good time. Wounded in the Boer War, he returned to England, met up with a friend, Jack Bilbrough, who persuaded him to try Canada instead of going back to South Africa. Incidentally, Bilbrough landed up in Swift Current and eventually built the block on Central now occupied downstairs by Shaws.

Yates came out in 1901, ranched on the White Mud and then on Swift Current Creek near the River. On Dominion Day, 1903, at Swift Current's patriotic celebration, he met a fellow who said he owned the Maple Creek Signal and would he like to buy it. The ebullient Yates took him up, became an editor. Later he was persuaded by Charlie Reid and lawyer W. O. Smyth, to bring the plant to Swift Current and The Sun was born upstairs over Reid's store (now Christie Grants). Smyth, incidentally, took Swift Current's 209th battalion overseas as officer commanding in the first war and became a district court judge.

Yates went back to ranching, raised a bit of hell as usual and when war was declared at once went to fight for God, King and Country. Got badly shot up, came back to his ranch with a silver plate in his head, and a quick temper. His ranch house which I visited on occasion was filled with war trophies, from Zulu spears up.

A talked-of episode of the early days: when he and town solicitor Charlie Bothwell (later a judge too and member of Parliament for Swift Current) visited the Chinese cafe at the corner of First East and Railway, the Royal George Dining Hall. The owner still wore a pigtail. Yates and Bothwell thought it a good idea to cut it off, and were chased all over town by an irate Chinese gentleman, wielding a big butcher knife. Today, a Chinese pigtail still hangs on the wall in Yates' Victoria home.

Before moving onto any other old pioneers of distinction, let's digress for a little more school talk, for the kids of those days were involved in the evolution of our community of today. Early merchant Charlie Reid's home was the big square stone house just east of the Chaplin street bridge, and there were daughters Belle, Winnie and Letitia. Saw all three of them not long ago here in Vancouver. Winnie married the late "Prof" Latour. Pioneers are hardy people. Believe it or not, Winnie, when I met her was on the way out for a golf game. Letitia married Cliff Shirriff of the experimental farm, and they lived for years out on the old Reid ranch north of town. In S.C.'s Jubilee year, 1955, Mr. Shirriff was president of the exhibition. Oddly enough, his son Cliff Jr., is now general manager of the Regina Provincial Exhibition.

Near me sat Frank Barber, whose Dad plied the dentist trade over Wigmore's. Doc had a permanent stiff neck and big red mustache, and could do a fancy job of yanking molars when pain killer wasn't so familiar. Mrs. Steve Marzek is a daughter. Doc was a fancier of race horses, had some beauts. Never happier than out at the race track on his sulky. Years later, in 1917, I surprisedly met son Frank Barber hauling sandbags into a deep dugout in France; a general headquarters dugout that is.

A very prominent family of the old days, of the old school days, were Mr. and Mrs. Frank West. They had Neil and Ruth. Neil was a hot fancy skater in his day, and among the first to ever race automobiles in the region, when the old McLaughlin was the Cadillac of the day. Ruth married the late Herb Cathrea, lawyer, and they later moved to Meadow Lake where he was chief factotum and magistrate and political leader for years in the Frontier North. Neil married Floss Borthwick, steno for lawyer Bothwell. Her dad was Enoch Borthwick, who had been police chief at Collingwood, Ont., and came to Swift Current in 1912 to be chief constable. Very tall and imposing looking like it seemed all early Currentonians were, was beloved of the youngsters. He also was an ardent curler.

But Frank West was really Mr. Swift Current for many of the early years. An ardent sport supporter, especially baseball, and curling and took a most active part in civic affairs and was signally honored on several occasions. Interesting to know that big Frank West came out from Adams, North Dakota, in July, 1907 in a partnership with Doherty and McEwan. They built the first modern grain elevator in southwestern Saskatchewan at Swift Current in the fall of 1907. Later when branch lines were built, they had elevators at Beverley, Gull Lake, Dunelm, two at Vanguard, Cantuar, Success and Battrum. He had the distinction of being the first mayor of the city of Swift Current when incorporated in 1914; also in 1915. Served many terms as alderman subsequently. The West's influence on my own orphan life was immense. Father and Mother West, as they affectionately were known, always had open house.

Incidentally, about Chief Borthwick. Their son, Jim, who in later years has been with Shaw's store, was undoubtedly Swift Current's all-time greatest all-round athlete. You name anything in sport, he could do it better. Jim could have made it easily to the big leagues in baseball or hockey, but somehow gave all his talents throughout Saskatchewan when he should have been cashing in.

They Even Teased the Police

Last week I mentioned Police Chief Borthwick. Back before that, in my school days, the Chief was John Smeaton, a grizzled, pipesmoking Englishman. I recall him in his "police cruiser" (a buggy hauled by a big bay gelding.) Well, those days the full-of-beans ranchers came to town spoiling for fun pulling pranks. Rancher Bill McNee was credited with hatching one of the best.

At the south-east corner of Central and Cheadle for years was a big yawning excavation (later the Canada Cafe stood there). In rainy weather it filled in. One day the boys came to town, borrowed a store dummy, threw it into the water. A kid was sent flying to call Chief Smeaton who was in the vicinity. Conscientious John came running, threw off his tunic and dived in to save the drowning "man". The streets strangely enough were absolutely empty when he got out. No TV, no movies. But they had fun those days, one way or another.

Funny thing about these early ranchers who used to come to town. Many of them had come out in the 80's with the big British '76 ranch project, which featured large herds of sheep and which project was doomed to a dismal failure later, because of the dread anthrax sheep disease and other complications. It was headed by Sir Lister Kaye. The first ranch foreman was Jim Smart who later ranched for years at the river near the Landing, as Yates and others did. And there were others like the Frank Goodwin family who ran the Saskatchewan Landing ferry for many, many years.

Among the ranchers, I remember well Walter Knight, the first white boy born in Swift Current a magnificent modelled figure of a man; his close and great friend 76'r George Smith who was the reeve of The Landing R.M. out there for years; the Cruickshanks; the McNees; the Tullys; the Laidley brothers; (a scion of the Tully old timers out north became a star football player with the Edmonton Eskimos and Vancouver Lions). Their high heeled cowboy boots rang through the days and years on Swift Current streets. One thing in retrospect that still intrigues me. These tough pioneers who started an empire on the prairies and went through all the hardships and vicissitudes on the plains, these were without doubt the most civilized, gentle, courteous, kind and soft spoken people I have ever met. Yes, they roared in the bars occasionally, but they respected people and observed juridical rights and were eminently responsible.

Besides the Imperial, the old Alexandra hotel was a home away from home for the pioneers. It is now of course, the York on Central. I remember when it had a long verandah on the first floor up facing down on 11th (Central). Here I used to see ladies with their hour-glass gowns sitting and watching the equestrian traffic. The hotel was built by Alex Lemon of Medicine Hat, who sold out in 1907 to Huff Powley who had first come west

from Orillia, Ont. His chief clerk was a short, kindly gentleman, (Scotty) Alex Rodie, who until his demise not so long ago, worked for a local whole-sale firm.

The Powley family have been identified with Swift Current since then. They built the tremendous big house at Third East and Dufferin, now a funeral home. It was one of the social centres, where parties saw men and women in full evening dress. Subsequent owners have included Mrs. Emily Webster (Imperial) and Jack Westlake, who came west in the early days from Ontario to play hockey on our semi-pro teams. There was Gwen, who married John Sanders, schoolmate of mine, now at Bowser, B.C. Charlie, Huffman, and Ralph, the latter still there. Charlie lives at Chilliwack and he was from the outset closely identified with the very first Frontier Days celebrations and was head of the rodeo committee for years.

The early social life of Swift Current could not be passed up without the Milburns. The Milburn ranch for years was south west of Swift Current. The family all went to school here and grew up through the many passing phases of the community. There was Lily, a classmate; sons, George, who became customs officer in his home town; Bill, a dentist who later practiced in Victoria, B.C., and where Reg ended up too. I remember Mr. Milburn, of so kindly a mien, who had once been a Mountie in the RNWMP days, and rode gun on the Royal Mail from Swift Current to Battleford in a buckboard and team of horses. At that time the Mounties wore the little pill box hats. Mr. Milburn was also a homestead inspector, wound up his career as Sheriff of the Judicial District of Swift Current.

Swift Current's first closed rink, as I remember it, was around the corner of Fifth East and Cheadle. I think it was owned by Bill Cooper of Argue and Cooper, when sons Alf and Gordon must have been but tiny toddlers. But it was run by Teddy Cooper (no relation) who in earlier days had drayed water supplies around town so folks wouldn't go thirsty. More about him later.

To watch hockey games mostly we used to sit around on bales of hay.

I guess the first curling rink I remember was built by the bend of the Creek south of the hospital, where the creek turns eastward. Later the curling rink was opposite Memorial Park across from Citizens Rink. Many of the famous curlers of the earlier days were spawned there and among the most enthusiastic were the Americans who had migrated to Swift Current. Talk about curling enthusiasm nowadays, but they really had it in the earlier part of the century. Only, it was subjectively a male pastime.

Among the original great skips of the S.C. Curling club such figures as J. G. Laycock, druggist; Doc. W. H. Field, Bob Edmanson, implement dealer Frank West, Archie Walkinshaw, druggist, as was Pete Rooney, C. E. Bray, real estate, Beecher Mann and Ed McKenzie, clothiers; Doc G. L. Cameron, lawyer S. A. Hutcheson, later a judge; Nick Carter, electrician, Sandy Ross, town electrical superintendent; Archie Johnson, hardware; etc., There was a Scottish motif for most of them as I remember played wearing Tam O Shanter hats.

Early Sports History

Last week we started reminiscing about sports, so will interject a few thoughts on sports in the early days, before going on to some more of the

early day folk. We had lots of avid sportsmen in town those days. I recall once after school we had a students committee go out after four to collect money for baseball uniforms. In one hour we garnered \$400, and that's a lot of money for those days; a \$1.00 was 100 cents.

The town was busting at the seams around 1911-1912. New settlers were pouring in to raise wheat and cattle, land and real estate going at outrageous prices. Our businessmen were very generous. You know, Swift Current was going to be a big city in the province that was barely five years old (1905).

An example: In the eight years following 1905, the Saskatchewan government gave out 15 charters to build and operate new railroads. One of these, in 1909, was to the "Saskatchewan Midland Railway", to be an eastward line from Kendal to Swift Current. There were also charters for a line Swift Current to Alsask and another to Assiniboia. They never were built of course, but it shows what was happening in Swift Current wasn't just local happenstance.

Anyway, sports minded men like Frank West, Joe Dempsey, Fred Schoonmaker, Ed Christopherson, J. E. "Dad" Briggs and others including a wonderful guy named Jake Kruse (whose sons perpetuated his art of painting and decorating) after he left. They decided to put Swift Current on the map and Regina and Moose Jaw could go blow their noses. Another promoter was J. W. Ford, father of Bill Ford who has equally been a sports promoter around here. They put up the dough and went far afield to bring in many top pros in hockey and baseball.

There had been precedent for this of course. Back in 1909 Fred Schoonmaker, partner-to-be of Dempsey in billiards and smoke shop, managed a team of pros which toured the western U.S. states as "Amateur Champions of Saskatchewan", whatever that implied. The publicity attendant resulted in quite a few Americans migrating to Swift Current and district. On that club were fellows like Bert Emms, CPR worker and aldermen later, the ebullient B. M. Hill, hardware merchant of Pennant for years after, Ernie Dodds, Jim "Doc" Black, the veterinarian and they became part of the community. Mr. Dodds later was with Great West Implements who sold the first Fords in these parts.

In the winter of 1911, Mr. Ford, who operated a flour mill on Railway, later a bakery, reached the nadir of his dreams as a sportsman. Regina, Moose Jaw and Weyburn had been dominating the sham-amateur scene in hockey. Swift Current would fix 'em. He and his committee assembled a team that was so powerful that eventually Swift Current was "thrown out" of the league, on the pretext of professionalism, which apparently they all were. From Fort William in came Rosie Helmer, big, redheaded, stormy leader of men, a classy first baseman and a good hockey player of more than ordinary ability. From there also Tanny Ross, who had grown up with Jack Adams, for years manager of the Detroit Red Wings. Tanny's father, Sandy was to be electrical superintendent of Swift Current for a time. Also Bill Bowers, brother of George and Bruce, Jack Lentsch, well known citizens later here for years. Harold Ailsby, well known farmer of Vesper district later, whose son Lloyd played in the NHL and recently coached Swift Current Broncos. In the 30s Rosie Helmer was trainer of the New York Americans (Rangers) and also coach one season.

They also brought in the Rochon brothers, George and Boola from Winnipeg and Bobby Genge; men who later played for Vancouver and Victoria in the first National Hockey League. There was bitter rivalry for years with other cities of Saskatchewan over this. Most of these men were crack ballplayers as well and Swift Current for a few years dominated big time sports in the province.

When J. W. Yager, a former telegrapher at the Crows Nest built the Yager Block (now Health Region building) on Cheadle, it was about the first fireproof building erected in the province. Downstairs, when it opened, was a beautiful billiard parlor, the operators being Helmer and Rochon. Mr. Yager's brother Bill, was later at one time a Sheriff of this judicial district.

The early days ball park was on the open prairie just west of Second West. Later another was built over at Ashley Park, and again thereafter moved to the city west of the present highways building on Cheadle West. Anyway, for years we played and watched baseball only by crossing over the swinging bridge by the hospital.

I was just looking at an old photo of the 1911-12 school hockey team, and I think only three of us are left. Welly Hutchinson, who became a wholesale grocery executive in Vancouver, whom I met up with lately; Jack Sanders at Bowser, B.C. and I are the other two.

There was Len Mitchell, Leo Metevier (lost in a prairie fire years ago south of Swift Current), Les Moote, died on a Japanese prison ship in World War II; the late Dr. Buttery and the late Prof. Latour. And I can tell the kids that we played rugby here over 50 years ago. Our coach for a time was Dr. Hughes, a brother of Mrs. Pete Rooney, who was in Swift Current for a while. But the game really didn't catch on. There was no opposition.

And at one time we had an honest-to-goodness roller skating rink in Swift Current. A large frame edifice, it was built just across the street, a little east, from the old collegiate on Cheadle.

Who You Would Meet on the Street

Who would you be liable to run into on the street in the days 1910-12 or thereabouts. Well there might be Sam Hellekson who ran the hardware store on Central opposite the Clinic, another tall American transplant of Scandinavian origin.

Or it might be a fellow who played a memorable part in Swift Current's earlier days, Charlie Thoreson, of the same ancestry as Hellekson. He was one of the towns first "real" boosters and was secretary of the Board of Trade for many years. Charlie always wore high stiff collars and looked as if he was choking to death. He had the International Lumber in the boom building days.

When Charlie passed away some time in the 40's as I recall, he left all he had, something around \$18,000 for a library in the new collegiate. A modest, straight-shooting guy, he was always overlooked in the limelight of louder talkers in the community. He just plain loved the folks and the community of Swift Current. He never was honored as he should have been.

Or you might be passing Cooper's store, hear strange sounding music

and look up to an open window over Reid's store across the street. Here on a lazy sunny day always sat Jack Haight another Yankee, sawing away on a violin. Atrocious music, but Jack thought it was great.

He operated a real estate and land company, Hudson Bay Land I think. I recollect being told the story that the first Socialist ever to hit Swift Current was a brother of Jack's, from Boharm, Sask. He started to preach socialism on our streets and a bunch of rough and ready pioneers ran him out of town on a rail. Hard to take this for gospel truth.

Or you might see Ed McKenzie or Beecher Mann, in the store they started in 1906 on Central in the Imperial Hotel annex. They later moved to the Bilbrough block and then to the present location which Ed built, Beecher having passed on.

The two sons Doug and the late Leslie, carried on the business. I always admired the amber stemmed pipes Ed smoked. A daughter, Dorothy, who could play all sports in school better than any man, in later years was Canadian women's champion in badminton and once had the distinction of being named Canadian Woman Athlete of the Year. Married to a Dunlop rubber company executive in Toronto, Bill Walton.

Then in the early days you might bump into J. H. Sykes who started a blacksmith shop in 1905, then on to farm implements in '09, followed with a garage and sold the first McLaughlin cars. Later his son Ed took over the business which had developed to musical instruments, radio, etc.

Jim Sykes Jr., now at Keremeos, B.C., was one of Swift Current's great hockey players when the Indians team dominated the intermediate scene in Western Canada. Mr. Sykes Sr. was a very quiet man, but kindly and friendly. He used to enjoy going up North to hunt and have some isolation from civilization periodically and could tell vast tales of the frozen North country. The Sykes store was also across from the Clinic on Central.

The boom years, when settlement was at its peak, brought another man who was to have a deep impact on the community. A young Englishman named W. W. Smith, "Bill" to everyone. He was in the real estate and insurance business first with a Mr. Trotter in the Imperial Hotel annex on Central.

His sons, Jack and Jerry carry on his business, while young Bill ended up operating Farmers Equipment Co. on Cheadle W. and was manager of the Chamber of Commerce for years, now with his brothers.

Incidentally, Farmers Equipment was in the very building which once housed the town hall and fire hall. The bell atop the building used to send the fire wagons (pulled by horses) out to fires, and also knelled the curfew for kids at a time when kids didn't really need curfew. Bill Sr. through the years took a continuous active part in every civic project of note. And he did love to sing. In later years I counted him as a wonderful friend. Bill loved to eat, a real gourmet. He acquired a ranch southeast of town and liked to have the gang out for gargantuan barbecue spreads and to be invited was an honor sought after.

When the first modern hospital was built around 1912, three palatial homes were also erected on Fourth West facing the hospital.

One was the Beecher Mann home (later W. W. Smith), south of that the Ed McKenzie home and on the corner of Sidney and Fourth West the big brick mansion of W. O. Smyth, lawyer, soldier and judge.

These were among the social centres for the community in those days. W. O. Smyth was an aristocratic man, with grey hair and mustache and erect bearing. He was married to a daughter of the Hartt family in Montreal, of "Hartt shoes". The Smyths used to have musical soirees at their big home. Later he made the upstairs into apartments, one of which I lived in for a time. I recall once, when radio first came out. He had invited a large group of the townfolk in to hear a radio concert. The vast livingroom was filled with chairs from the undertaking parlor. Came 8 o'clock and the damned radio wouldn't utter a squawk. The red-faced judge was apologetic and apoplectic. But those were the days.

This writer was going to deal with the contribution to Swift Current of Dr. O. M. Irwin in a later column, but now he is gone—but not forgotten. To me and to many others, he was a valued and old friend. It seems only a short time, not half a century, since I first saw the young doctor from Neville way, at a baseball practice we were having, and he shagged in the outfield in an old sweater and running shoes.

He was not the first doctor but one longest to service the community, a most wonderful asset in every way. Dr. Irwin was tolerant, understanding and had great humanism. He sometimes appeared to be an awfully stern sort of a guy, but inside he was pure, good, and soft hearted. He did a lot of good in his 50 years, not only to the sick and troubled, but in the realm of education which was one of his prime loves. He was the sole survivor of the men who built the first clinic in Swift Current. He had been Mayor and alderman and goodness knows what he wasn't. He became a real Currentonian and contributed a fine family to the community. He was a great lover of sports, particularly baseball. Such men as Oscar Irwin don't come along every day to prairie communities. He will be remembered, with affection, and what better monument could any man leave in this world.

Currentonians Hit Big Time

Got to thinking the other day about the many Currentonians who through the years have gone on to bigger things and accomplishments in Canadian life. Off hand I can think of quite a few. I can think of at least nine local lawyers who became judges. These were Dan Buckles, S. A. Hutcheson, brother of one of earliest druggists; C. E. Bothwell, J. E. Friesen, W. O. Smyth (the first), A. McClelland, Thomas Gallant, M. A. MacPherson, Roy T. Graham. "Mac" MacPherson later practised in Regina, was Attorney-General in the Anderson Conservative government, appointed judge and headed the federal MacPherson Transportation Royal Commission. He was married to a daughter of local grocer, J. E. "Dad" Briggs.

J. G. Taggart, who was the first superintendent of the Swift Current Dominion Experimental Station, built 1921, was elected as an M.L.A. and became Minister of Agriculture in the provincial Liberal government. Later he was called to Ottawa and served as Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Canada. The man who succeeded him, the late L. B. (Len) Thomson was like Mr. Taggart, a wonderful community worker.

To combat the dust bowl era, it was Mr. Thomson who conceived the

idea of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act (PFRA) that so changed the economy of Western Canada. He became its national director but though his new homesites were Regina and Ottawa, he never lost his love for Swift Current and its people. His successor, Grant Denike, followed in their footsteps community-wise, until he was called to Ottawa to do special work for the Department of Agriculture, taking him to "foreign aid" countries. Hockey and Frontier Days were hobbies of his.

Dr. George L. Cameron, an early years dentist, served in two wars and ended with rank of Colonel, head of the Canadian Dental Corps In War II. Dr. Cameron served in many civic capacities through the years; on council, school and collegiate boards, Rotary Club president, etc. A fine storyteller was he.

It can be mentioned also that Hon. Walter Scott, first Premier of Saskatchewan once represented Swift Current in the Legislature.

Roy Graham, who started out as a realtor in the early days, was a major in Swift Current's 209th battalion in War I, was badly wounded in action. Returning he joined in starting the Swift Current Clinic, took up law, became a Queen's Bench Judge. Prior to that he was elected Liberal M.P. for his constituency. He also was chairman of the Royal Commission on gasoline prices. Before his passing he lived in either Ottawa or Regina.

Joe and Jack Dempsey, who when they went to school here starred in baseball and hockey, later went to Northwestern University in Chicago. After the 1929 "bust" they went into the investment banking business, came into the millionaire class. Now Joe has a home in Hawaii. They were in a consortium which tried to buy the Chicago Cubs from billionaire gum man, William Wrigley Jr. Once when Bob Moore and I were visiting them in their offices in the Marshall Field Building in Chicago, Joe was having a chummy telephone conversation with Henry Kaiser in L.A.

An early realtor in business here with Roy Graham, Jim Bone became mayor of Belleville, Ont. A local lawyer, Archie McWilliam, once partner with Herb Cathrea, was in later years mayor of Glendale, California.

Claire Wodlinger, whose dad was a merchant here in the early days, and mother an accomplished violinist, was big in the old CBC radio days as Aunt Mary, one of the best known soap operas. She later married the late John Draine, one of the prominent characters of Canadian radio and television.

Howard Day, who played local senior hockey and then coached the Indians, became Chief Legal Counsel for the Toronto Transportation Commission. He served as major in the local 8th Recce Regt., after the war moved to Toronto where brother "Hap" Day was then coach of the Toronto Maple Leafs. Retired lately, Howard was succeeded by Don Elliott, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Elliott, well known local people. The late "Abie" Elliott was one of our best second basemen in history; a lawyer also.

Mr. Day headed all the legal work for the new Toronto subway. He and I were student buddies in the law office of his uncle, the late Judge Bothwell for a while after War One.

Bill Mawhinney who went to school here is now a high executive of the British branches of Massey Harris Co., lives in London. Captain Bill Hayes, RCN, a crack track man when in high school here, son of Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Hayes, joined the navy, had a distinguished naval career, survived a torpedoing and among other posts, Commandant at the Royal Military

College, Kingston. His late dad was a lawyer here with J. O. Begg and also served as mayor.

Bill Pescud used to deliver telegrams here on his bike for CPR Telegraphs. When I last met him in the fifties he was Chief of Communications for the CNR with headquarters at Montreal. Ted Peterson was once an insurance man with an office just north of McKenzies store; we used to gather for poker sessions there often. Now Ted is president of Investors Syndicate, one of Canada's largest concerns of this type. Ernie Marrison, manager of Woolworths here, retired at Toronto after achieving a vice-president's status. Dr. Art Peart, with the Health Region in its initial stages became secretary of Canadian Medical Association.

Some Early Tragedies

Of all the Old Country men who came out as foremen with the '76 Ranch venture in the 80's, I knew best John Oman and Bill Alexander.

In my days, Mr. Alexander had the big farm west of the experimental station, at the junction of No. 4 highway. Daughter Edith was a teacher for many years here later.

A reserved Scotsman, quiet, of elegant character and an experience to chat with, John Oman had the place just south of the present Oman school, across the tracks. He was a sheep man, an inheritance from his training in Scotland, a grand old fellow.

East of Oman's was for years the big '76 Ranch barn, demolished only in later years as progress hit the southside of town. The old barn breathed history and as a youngster I was somehow always scared of the place.

I always thought Mr. Oman was the first to take over the old '76 Ranch place, but Mrs. Martha Miller, daughter of Hill Gregory, told me recently that a family by the name of Brigaman had it for a while, then left to settle in Utah. She tells that when her brother Joe was around 11, he and young George Brigaman climbed up into the hayloft one morning and discovered a dead man, who had shot himself in the head. It was thought at the time he was responsible for murdering a man up at Sask. Landing.

She also recalls that the first dairyman Swift Current ever had was a little English chap named Openshaw, who later moved to New Zealand. This was around 1903-05 and Martha remembers seeing Mrs O. often charging into the Imperial bar and dragging Openshaw out, always screaming, "Get drunk again will you," while the inhabitants laughed. She also wonders if anyone remembers that the race track where July 1 celebrations were held at that time was about 3rd Avenue West.

When I first came to Swift Current in 1910, the south side was kind of a forlorn wayout place. There was the CPR pumphouse and the Morrison home, but south of the tracks just a few houses in which some railway people lived. Most of the action was north of the right of way. The creek was a pretty big stream those days. I remember sometime around '10 or '11, a little lad belonging to a railway family drowned in the creek right at the bend, near where the eastend crossing used to be. They were out in rowboats trying to locate the body. Having a bicycle on the spot I was sent lickety-split into town

to have Gus Reidler, our blacksmith, fashion grappling irons. It was a sad thing in the little community when the police finally got him out.

And oddly enough, 20 years later there was another tragedy, only worse, just south of the same spot. This was on a Vimy Ridge night dance at the Princess Royal, April 9, when one of the worst blizzards in history struck. We had all been at the dance and when we came out you couldn't see three feet in front of you.

Five members of the Tillison family were found the next morning in the creek, having driven into the water blindly during the storm on the way home, as they lived on the south side. Just as I had been on the spot 20 years earlier I was asked by Inspector Jim Taylor of the provincial police, later a mayor of the city, to run over to the Kuster home off the bank of the creek for an axe.

I can still see Jim standing on top of the square Ford wielding his axe to get down into the car for the bodies. Those are all memorable incidents in the life of a prairie community. But folks were more together those days, and everyone shared in trouble as well as joys.

I forgot to mention a couple of early hotel men of the 1910-and-on era. One was Jack Bertin, a mustached little English gentleman who spoke like an Oxford graduate. He and Mr. Webster had the Reliance Hotel west of the Imperial. Mr. Bertin later had a store south of the present Bank of Montreal. Charlie Turner of the Imperial Hotel was also an Englishman, short and stout with a pronounced bay-window on which always was a heavy gold chain. He never seemed to wear a jacket and had colored garters on his arms above the elbows. Colorful characters all — in an age when there were tough and colorful characters in and out of the frontier communities. I have in front of me a photostat of an advertisement in *The Sun* of around 1909, saying in part: "Reliance Hotel, Swift Current, Assiniboia. Under New Management. Gents you're welcome. We are prepared to furnish you with the very finest cigars and drinks, every minute if desired. Consequently there is no time lost. If you do not get your drink red-hot or ice-cold, as desired, please mention the fact to the proprietor and the barman will be blown to the clouds from the mouth of a cannon."

Some of the modern ad writers mightn't think that's so hot, but it did for those days. Mr. Bertin built the big frame house on the south-west corner of Chaplin and 2nd West. Guess it's still standing.

The Healy Hotel has played a big part in the life of Swift Current from 1912 forward and that's quite a story by itself. J. T. Booker, a very pleasant and fine looking man from Kentucky, was the first owner. He was associated with the hotel and the Healy-Booker Block with a contractor, Mr. Healy of Toronto, whose son Mike was for years later owner of the Eagle theatre. After Mr. Booker's passing Mrs. Booker, then Ridgeway and Mary Booker carried on the famous hostelry. Mary was the daughter of pioneer ranchers Mr. and Mrs. Jim Orr, whose place was across the tracks west of town. Apparently Mr. Booker wasn't altogether a newcomer. I've seen an item that Mr. Booker clerked at the survey for the townsite of Swift Current. Before The Healy he had also been in the shoe business on Central Ave. with Ernie Delaney. His widow acquired the Empress hotel for a few years until it was destroyed by the 1932 fire.

Wigmores Still in Business

The history of Dominion Day celebrations and exhibitions in Swift Current goes back a long way. But the first annual organized Fair was held on October 12, 1909, and its first president was H. E. Clinite.

An early recollection for me is that he came to town first as a barber. He later built the Clinite block on First east. This building was at various times after 1912-13 occupied by Hymie Wodlinger, merchant, the Elks Lodge and for some years Vern Wallace used to run professional wrestling there. Now the building is owned and occupied by the Sun. The exhibition secretary in 1909 was Sam Moore, Sun editor.

Mr. Clinite's son, Verol used to practice chiropractic in the Yager block. Verol, I think, was one of the first "dissenters" I ever knew, and they were rare in those days. He was always "agin" the establishment.

I'm getting a little ahead of the older days, but talking of exhibitions and celebrations brings to mind Frontier Days, and we'll reminisce about that later on.

However in the days when Swift Current had its first exhibition, the town's business world was quite a bit different too.

T. W. Hutcheson, a tall handsome guy, ran the drugstore (now Bradbrookes at Central and Cheadle). It was built originally by Dr. Field, first doctor in the community, who in later years as a council member in his stern, uncompromising way, caused many a flare up of the city fathers in session. "Hutch" had a pretty good voice, loved singing and made the welkin ring in choirs, concerts, etc.

Shields and Mogridge on Central sold patent leather shoes; there was the Swift Current Trading Co. (Pattersons) with furniture; the Union Bank and its manager J. K. Hislop were making loans; Anderson and Edmansons were John Deere agents.

Incidentally, Mr. Edmansons built that tremendous stone home at the top of North Hill which was later St. Joan of Arc Academy, and now a MacWilliams apartment house.

Nelson Petch had a grocery store. The Famous Mercantile Co. (I think the latter was after the Quittenbaums), run by a Mr. Demels and then by a very tall fellow named Pete Hessel, a guy who everybody in the community liked.

We're still running around from year to year in a haphazard manner, but I can't go further without special mention for a J. "Art" Wigmore. The Wigmore name threads through every Swift Current newspaper continuously for nearly 60 years. I don't know of anyone living who can make that boast, that he, personally, has been in active business here that long.

Mr. Wigmore has always been a remarkable man in my view. He has always carried his years lightly, and always been a wonderful community supporter. Wigmore's is a name known hundreds of miles around. If I recollect rightly back in 1912 the store on Central was named Wigmore's Fair.

Art had a very popular man with him for years in Harvey McMahon, who later went into business in Shaunavon and became their M.L.A. He married one of the town's pretty stenographers, who toiled for Begg and Hayes, lawyers. Mac's widow the former Lila Anderson, came to live in the same apartment we did in Vancouver.

I guess besides the Wigmores, only two more businesses of the earlier

days are carried on by the family members; McKenzies and Shaws. Fownes Jewellers is in the same category.

I guess when you think back on longevity in business in Swift Current you cannot forget Matt James, who probably sold more meat to folk in the community than anyone else. As a butcher he probably came after William Sanders, the ex-Mountie who had guarded the Landing ferry during the Riel Rebellion days, and later had a shop opposite the depot.

Mr. James was in partnership with Charlie Rixson, and the James and Rixson shop was on Railway just west of the Imperial Hotel.

Both were Englishmen. After Rixson retired, Mr. James couldn't stand retirement and until his passing not too many years ago cut and sold meat for Greenways just south of Coopers. Also Mr. James for over half a century was a pillar of St. Stephen's Anglican church, preached thousands of sermons, performed at funerals, etc. Soft-spoken, a silvery handsome man, Matt James, typified the best type of people in the community.

And, Swift Current being a divisional point on the CPR, railway families were part of our overall history. There was John McNeillie, who lived on Railway street as others did, like the Hudsons and the Rutherfords, Trimbles.

When I came on the scene I think the only tree in Swift Current was at McNeillie's on Railway east and the one at Fenton's Grove up the Creek called "The Lone Tree." Son Alex "Muck" McNeillie played lots of great hockey for the famous Indians and continued like the Hudson boys, with the railway. A daughter is Mrs. Ralph Dempsey.

There were the Henze's whose daughter Grace stenoed for Judge Charlie Bothwell, later married him. And the Cuttings, one of whom is Mrs. Jack Lundholm of the Lyric theatre; and the Haywards and many more. Like John Furnis, who had been a locomotive foreman, later homestead inspector, and then ran the big livery barn on First West where now stands the Beaver Lumber.

There was a long watering trough across the street from Furnis's barn which was used by horses, oxen and other animals when the old pioneer homesteaders used to come in for supplies. Myrtle Furnis, a classmate, later married Dr. Sharpe, who until his untimely passing was with the Swift Current Clinic.

The Very First "Dentist"

Doctors and dentists of the older days: As noted previously, Dr. E. H. Field was No. One in Swift Current. He came from Ontario.

Doctors those days had to be entirely dedicated to survive—that is, on the prairies. Often saw him in the dead of winter, in his voluminous coon coat, bundled into his cutter, out to serve humanity in the bleak outlands; rain, shine or blizzard. Great curler, participant in civic affairs, a man to remember.

Among others of his day, Doc Kelly, a tall, very gaunt looking man, enigmatic in conversation, the town health officer for some years; and Doc Hoppin who lived way out in the east end environs.

Among the earlier dentists beside George Cameron was Dr. Herbert Lake, a Beau Brummel pleasing of eye to the ladies of Swift Current.

As I remember he pulled 'em out' in his office above Jake Kruse's place this side of the now Lyric Theatre. Strangely enough, just recently had a letter from Dr. Lake's son in Los Angeles, one whom I had not known, but he was seeking information.

As the boom days descended on Swift Current, and settlers started pouring in, another drug store was opened at First East and Railway by J. P. (Pete) Rooney. For some 40 years or so, Pete was a pillar of this community in every way. A short, personable druggist of Irish extraction, he was one of the finest characterized men I have ever associated with.

Pete was an outstanding curler and golfed when the links were over on the south side, before Elmwood.

Irish-like, Pete had a temper, although in nature very gentle. As witness, the story of the time Pete bungled a putt, got so steamed up he broke his club over the back of a cow munching serenely nearby. He moved the drugstore to Central, later taken over by Archie Walkinshaw. Pete went into optometry, and now son, Phil, follows in that line.

In the old Rooney Pharmacy you'd often see a young kid named Freddie Herman, for years the Mutual Life district agent. Freddy later became a druggist himself, was in business at Meacham, Sask., then back here with J. G. Laycock until he quit the pills and into a very successful insurance career. Through the years an outstanding community man and long-time Kiwanian.

The late Archie Walkinshaw also had a great impact on his community, in between for a while at Hodgeville. Everybody liked him. He played ball, as did Herman, for local clubs. A daughter, Jean, became an outstanding pianist, studied in Europe and New York, now teaching in Montreal.

Talking about dentists; the actual "first" here was our old friend, Hill Gregory, among the first white men to reside here. This came to light when he died suddenly Sept. 17, 1923. He would have put present day hypochondriacs to shame.

He didn't retire to a rocking chair, but was clerking in Hadder's store on Railway just west of the Bottling works. One morning came to work, went out front to bring in the ice the iceman had left, collapsed and died.

Hill's Indian given-name was "Wepetuh," meaning His Teeth. He was the only resident here at that time who had false teeth, a poor fitting set. The Indians had never seen false teeth. One day when the Indian children were playing around him at the store, his teeth fell out. The children ran to the teepees crying out, "Wepetuh, Wepetuh" and the Indians and their squaws came running out to see "the teeth."

He was the first "dentist" and extracted lots of teeth. When occasion required, he was a doctor too. He got herb medicine from the Indians and earned the gratitude of many a suffering pioneer. He once left his forceps out at the River, and pulled a tooth for Bill McTaggart with a pair of lineman's wire pliers.

He also repaired watches, the old style timepieces, for the residents. What he wasn't to the community! His greatest fault was good nature and unselfishness. Hill was very proud of the Fenian Raid medal which he earned after serving in the Niagara (Ontario) district during that troublesome period.

Today we have plaques and monuments to many people. I always hoped some time Hill Gregory's name would be signally honored in Swift Current. His memoirs left to the family are very absorbing. I was honored to know that humble citizen.

Red Newman, Our Bob Hope

Some of my old friends may be thinking, when the heck is this guy going to get around to our family. Hold your horses, pretty soon. Mostly, I'm working off the top of my head in recollecting. Sometimes I think of an old timer or incident in the middle of the night.

The other night I woke up and thought, of all things, of "Red" Newman. Well, in the World War One days, and for a decade after, the "Dumbbells", Canadian Army Overseas concert party, was as well known as Bob Hope and his USO troupe.

One of the best known men overseas and in Canada was "Red" Newman, star of the troupe. The red headed Lancashire comic, before he enlisted in 1914, was bell hop at Swift Current's spanking new 80-room Empress Hotel, built by Bill Drever.

After the war the Dumbbells made a triumphant tour of Canada, and Red brought them to Swift Current to show off to the home town folks. There was a wholesale liquor shipping joint in the west part of the Imperial and we managed to get into some kegs. Boy, what a party for the Dumbbells! I think barber Charlie Skeates will remember.

Swift Current in those days had a lot of firsts. We had the tallest policeman in Canada, Long Joe Lawrence. He ran around an inch or so over seven feet. He made Chief Borthwick and Sergt. Phil Hauck look like midgits. But he was the nicest guy, was Long Joe. He had a penchant, in his social life, for peanut sized girls. Those days youngsters felt all policemen were friends, not like today when they shout police brutality for a sideways glance. It was something to see Long Joe striding down Central, casting a long, long shadow.

If I'm digressing too much, I'll be back on old timers later. Another interesting fellow those days was A. S. Bennett. When Alex Carey and Gren Corbett bought out the Weekly news which had been started in 1911, they brought in Bennett to edit the newspaper, The Herald. Believe it or not 25 years before the St. Lawrence Seaway project was even initiated, Bennett ran propaganda for a Seaway—from Swift Current! He wrote pamphlets and books on the subject emanating from our frontier community. Actually I think he was paid by Eastern interests to carry out the propaganda. Anyhow I think he was one of the smartest newspapermen I ever knew. But he dearly loved the cup that cheers. I used to write the odd sports item for him. After the war I met A. S. in front of the Bank of Commerce one morning. Said he to me "I'm leaving, how would you like to be editor of The Herald?" Sure, said I, and that's how I became an instant newspaperman. He and Editor Sam Moore of The Sun used to have some terrible editorial battles on local issues. Gleefully I carried on the tradition, and that's why, maybe, in 1932 Mr. Moore asked me to succeed him when he retired.

This Sam Moore was a great Swift Current character in his own right. He became a member of the Legislature for Pinto Creek constituency. He was in the records as "The Silver Tongued Orator", and one of the finest I've ever heard. But he made enemies at Regina, on the Banks of the Was-cana. Those days it helped to have influence on your side if you wanted a hotel license. Sam was accused, right on the floor of the Legislature, with surreptitiously letting loose bedbugs in a country hotel in his constituency to "get" someone. It was never proven, of course, but they made hay and for a while he was termed by some provincial dailies of the period as "Bedbug Sam".

Even son Bob, whom I later partnered with on The Sun, enjoys the story, which isn't true. Sam was a great community man, working hard as president of the hospital for years, of the Board of Trade, etc. In great demand all over the country as a speaker.

Another flash came to me the same night like "Red's". When the elegant brick Empress hotel burned to the ground around 10 a.m., Christmas Day, 1932, it was funny—but tragic kinda—as the huge crowd saw Mr. A. C. Bluett come down a rope from the second floor in his long nightshirt, legs kicking wildly. You had to know A. C. He was a cherubic, fat, short, bald Englishman who presided at the wicket in the post office for some years, oftentimes quite testily unless you knew and understood him. It was December 25 but by a freak of the weather, that day we played golf at Elmwood after the fire. That hotel was a great loss for Mr. Drever was a wonderful host. When Rotary or other clubs had their luncheons there, it wasn't just the usual damp chicken and peas. You had your individual choice of the menu.

The hotel was across Cheadle Street from the Farmers Equipment. Lots of social affairs there were in formal dress. Those were the days. I recall one Armistice Night banquet held there, and a certain Mayor of Regina was to be chief speaker. He was a veteran too. When introduced, he tottered to his feet, and then with a silly grin slowly sank and sank, under the table. Great cheers!

There were quite a few Chinese in Swift Current in the earlier days, of this I'll write more anon. But one I remember well had a cafe on Railway across from the depot. His name was Yee Gee. Yee had done well by himself. I remember once Frank West telling me that Yee came in to settle a fuel bill or something and wanted to pay by cheque. "What bank?" asked Frank. "Any bank, makes no difference," answered Yee. What makes the story interesting is that there were eight banks in Swift Current then. You might be surprised to know that at war time, there were eight Chinese laundries in town, within the confines of Central, First East and First West, and Second West and Second East. They were named: American, Chicago, Church, Famous, Lee Turn, Sing Lee, Wing Lee and Swift Current Steam Laundry Fourth Ave. West. Believe it or not. If the population numbered 5,000 it must have included the dogs and cats.

Biggest Barn in World

A bit of history that never fails to thrill me, tho' I have written it many times. And it marks history that links Swift Current and Battleford so closely. I still think that proper plaques should some day at both cities be placed to

commemorate it. It begins with the Indian uprising in 1885, and the return to the plains of their leader, Louis Riel . . . the handful of settlers and Mounties beleaguered behind the stockade in Battleford. The Indians camped seven miles out. And then word of the terrible Frog Lake massacre on April 4.

That was when Swift Current became important. It was the railway jumping off place, and telegraph link. The train carrying Colonel Otter and relieving troops from the east arrived, and camped just southwest of the hamlet. The military convoy was four miles long, and what a sight it must have been on the lonely prairie. The crossing was at Saskatchewan Landing.

It was on April 22 that the relieving column from Swift Current was sighted. What a thrill for the folks in Battleford when they saw the dusty cavalcade wind slowly up the river valley; the dark green uniforms of the Queen's Own Rifles, the red coats of the Governor-General's Foot Guards of Toronto, the blue of artillery units from Quebec and the brown khaki of more Mounties.

We who travel in luxurious jets and motor cars these days don't even realize what it took to survive in the early days . . . not too long ago at that. That train load of troops didn't arrive in Swift Current without hardship. The railway wasn't quite completed and the troops had to march from North Bay along the north shore of Lake Superior, some 50 miles over slippery and broken ice; from Winnipeg to Swift Current in open coal cars and then march the 180 miles across wilderness to reach Battleford.

"Dad, can I have the car to go down to the hot dog stand?"

Just recently I wrote something about the buffalo in this region. Few people realize that the buffalo came nearer to dominating the life and shaping the institutions of a human race than any other animal. It is estimated that on the continent at the time of their maximum abundance, there were no less than 75 million buffalo, serving as food and raiment for the Indian, early explorers and settlers. The buffalo had more influence on man than all plains animals combined. A historical footnote of significance.

There is no question that Walter Knight, rancher out north for years, was the first white boy born here. The McTaggarts claim that daughter Florence, later Mrs. H. S. Peterson was the first white girl born here, in 1891. And the first white wedding was that of Mr. and Mrs. William Sanders. I knew the three families well. Mrs. Ralph Desbrisay is a daughter of Mrs. Peterson's. As a youngster I was in the McTaggart home often.

Another old interesting note; for years a tourist attraction was out at Leader, on the Empress line, and many of us had a look at it before it was demolished. That was the W. T. Smith ranch barn. It was the "Biggest Barn In The World", continent-wide notoriety. The barn was 128 x 400 feet, 60 feet high. There were 815,000 feet of lumber used; 30,000 bags of Portland cement, 60,000 feet of corrugated galvanized iron roofing. The ranch comprised of 10,000 acres with 2,000 acres irrigated, also grew alfalfa and corn. When W. T. died, the estate went into years of litigation. Bothwell and Campbell, local lawyers, handled it. When I did a couple of years as a student there I had to shuffle through thousands and thousands of letters in the estate file. The final legal fees were astronomical.

Some columns ago I mentioned Ernie Dodds, who played on one of our earliest ball clubs. He also was identified with the first auto business here. He worked for the Great Northern Hardware until the big fire in 1911, then he and two employees took over the implement lines in building on north-east

corner of Cheadle and Second West. They secured the Ford auto agency in 1913. The building was constructed of cement blocks manufactured by the old cement works that once thrived on the south side. Ernie was a fine curler, hunter and an ardent horticulturist. Murray Dodds is a son.

Guess the first optician in Swift Current must have been W. H. Wilkins. In his very bearing he added class to the community. Circumspect, always nicely tailored, with his pince-nez and shaped beardlet, this aristocratic looking Englishman didn't look out of place even in the frontier community. One daughter, Marjorie has become a famous author and magazine writer of Canada, lives in Toronto. Dorothy married Gordon Cooper, son of W. W., they now live in Vancouver, the latter couple always were closely identified with the community affairs.

Our First Frontier Days

As I write this before the 1969 Frontier Days, it doesn't seem possible that 30 years have passed since that memorable start of the now famous celebration, second only to the Calgary Stampede.

Its genesis was the enthusiasm, vision and community spirit of a group of young men. This was on the heels of the "Dirty Thirties", the dustbowl and depression. Times were tough, and Swift Current itself threatened to become a hopeless place.

Many farmers in the district had been government-moved to Northern Saskatchewan.

At one period in this decade, there were quite a number of stores on Central empty, with yawning front windows.

What to do?

In the year 1933-34 George Thomson was president of the Rotary Club. The one-armed Scots lawyer (he lost his limb in the Dardenelles, fighting), and I had an idea, that of collecting antiques, war souvenirs and works of art from citizens and decorating the empty store windows, to hide some of the desolation. Actually it became a Rotary project and served its purpose.

Then came the rains, the rehabilitation of agriculture in our region, and the Hitler war, and Swift Current's economy started upward again.

Incidentally, Mr. Thomson startled the natives nearly three decades earlier by being the first person ever to wander up Central in "plus fours" and carrying strange things called golf sticks. He used to putt around by himself on the bald prairie. Many of the trees on Elmwood golf course were planted and paid for by Mr. Thomson, his very own project. He was later a provincial magistrate here, a very fine citizen.

Anyway, about 1935 there were a group of young men who called themselves the Metropolitan Church Young Men's Club as I recall. They felt the urge to do something to jazz up the old town and had been wrestling with the problem. This writer was invited up to a meeting one night in the council chambers to speak to them, maybe came up with some ideas. To make a long story short, a story which is old hat to old timers but maybe not to the newcomers here, the boys went into action . . . what was to become the Kinetic Club and Frontier Days was off and running.

They asked the city if they could join in putting on the 1937 affair, and

they did. Then in 1938 under arrangement took over and put on the celebrated "Bearded City" celebration, which brought Canada-wide recognition.

Swift Current physically became an actual frontier town, and folks all dressed that-away. For weeks prior to July 1, usually staid citizens, men, women and children, dressed in western costume, met trains at the station to advertise the event. There was a camaraderi in Swift Current which had to be experienced; the old town came of age and all Canada knew about it.

Nobody was prepared for what happened. It is estimated 25,000 visitors converged, clogging the highways and long waiting lines of cars at the Ferry. It was a day to be remembered. There wasn't enough food, there wasn't enough shelter, many slept in cars on the prairie. But everyone took it in perfectly good humour and the day was a big success.

Can't forget our Danish butcher friend, amiable Hans Rothgordt who had the job of barbecuing a couple of steers out at the west-end grounds. Most folks got rawish meat, but who cared. Subsequently among the many successes, came such events as International Day when store fronts went Taj Mahal to Mexican. A formal invitation was actually sent out to Hitler and Mussolini to open the affair; but they were otherwise occupied.

A lot of people must take a bow for the spadework thru the early years. It was a labor of community love, to put the old burg on the map. There were many, but a choice few carried the ball, without whose dedication it would still be a small time affair.

There were teachers Ralph Desbrisay, Ken Lewis and Kem Aberdeen, Ken Rutherford; Irving Hansen (the long time general manager), the Harding brothers, Charlie Powley, etc. Today, well, the finest riders in the world would no more think of missing Swift Current than the Calgary Stampede.

Incidentally, Ken Rutherford, principal of Oman school, later alderman and Mayor, moved to Prince George, B.C., after being unsuccessful in an election running as a CCF candidate. He has taken a prominent part there in civic and political affairs, as he did in Swift Current.

The Kinetic Club functioned for 12 successive unbelievable years of success, then in 1954 their labor of love was merged into the Swift Current Agricultural and Exhibition Association, with Mr. Hansen as permanent manager.

Those first Bearded Days had a broom factory beaten many ways. Bank managers, lawyers, doctors, and what have you, all wore beards, and they were splendid to behold. If I remember right, the first prize was won by Jimmy Sykes, stalwart star defenceman of the Indians hockey team, with a tremendous brilliant red foliage. Jim is now a resident in Keremeos, B.C.

The old, old Fair Association functioned at the fair grounds on the southside until 1922 when it was dismantled. Newcomers should know that we had the best racing track in Western Canada, a large covered grandstand, stables and all the appurtenances found at big city Fairs of those days.

Buffalo and the Bones

Talking of celebrations, I once interviewed and wrote the story told me by William Brunyee, after he retired from his River ranch and came in to live at his home opposite the courthouse. Bill had come here in 1903, a York-

shire lad, and attended what he claimed was probably the first organized July 1st celebration. He estimates the population at about 200, but this was augmented by cowboys and ranchers from the Matador, Turkey Track and other ranches. It took him about six hours to come in on his pinto from the Smart ranch.

The front part of the Imperial Hotel had been built. Before that, local prohibition had prevailed, and liquor had to come by train from Regina. So they took advantage of the bar and there was merry whoopee, and lots of bull sessions. The only restaurant in town was run by a Chinaman named Lee Chang. It was right where the old Sun building was, west of the Imperial on Railway. They all celebrated Dominion Day in real high spirits—literally.

And how old time families link: Daughter Diane Brunyee married Alfred Cooper, son of the W.W.'s, still live here, fine community workers; another daughter married Frank Hansen, in the early 30's an editor of the Herald, and in Regina has been top brass PR for the CCF and NDP.

As a feature of the first real "Bearded" celebration, we arranged a memorable broadcast, I think the first remote one our way. Regina's CKCK brought their equipment up, with Harold Crittenden the announcer (he was later station manager). And that was before there was any radio station in Swift Current. The master of ceremonies was Hon. J. C. Taggart.

I sat fascinated through the whole broadcast, because we had some real old timers chatting and recalling the old days. We had Charlie Reid, one of our early merchants. Also Charlie Millie, old time rancher from Fox Valley. But the two prize participants were Pat Trottier of Lac Pelletier, one of the last of the buffalo hunters, killing them for food for the wagon trains going from Swift Current to Battleford. Also Donald Gunn, who had been born north of Swift Current in 1877, of Scottish and Indian blood, who knew much about the last of the Indians, half breeds and buffalo. His father was one of the first legislators of Manitoba. It was a simulated "camp fire" meeting. The broadcast was in a room above the Diana Cafe, later The Modern on Central.

It was recalled that there were many buffalo roaming around and in 1887 one of the most magnificent specimens ever seen was killed by Way-mistogosen-kah-moswot (The Man Who Ate A Frenchman), a Cree Indian. He sold the head to John A. Grant here, who had it mounted and it's supposed to be still in Red Deer, Alta. He refused \$1,000 for the head by a land company. It was loaned to the Dominion Government and was exhibited at Chicago's Worlds Fair. In 1883 three more were brought in by a halfbreed, John Nolan, two cows and a calf. The heads and hides were bought by Currie Bros., local merchants.

It was recalled, of course, that Mr. Reid had shipped buffalo bones from here. They went to eastern markets. The old weather-beaten ones were ground into meal for fertilizer. A few choice one went into bone china, but most of them were prepared for use in refining sugar.

And a funny note; Most people have heard of the near massacre which occurred in the tiny hamlet of Swift Current in '85, during the Rebellion. The Cree Indian Totoe, who aimed his rifle at a recalcitrant Chief, and saved what would have been a disaster, is remembered by Martha Gregory (Mrs. Miller now) daughter of Hill Gregory, now living in Vancouver. Recently she told me, "I remember Totoe, who used to bring fresh fish to our ranch and would trade it for flour, salt and tea and to have talks with Dad. Old Totoe thought there was no one like Dad. I remember him carrying me pick-

a-back from the corral to the house and would be given a cup of tea. Mother would then take me in the house and examine my head. Never could find any though." Another interesting item on Swift Current's geographical history. The CPR had first picked a site east of the present one. But a couple of men had preceded construction and squatted on the land and wouldn't give up their claim under \$10,000. The company offered \$1,000. This was refused so the company laid out the townsite one section further west and the squatters after holding out for about six months, finding their claims useless, abandoned them and went to work for the same CPR. Thus began Swift Current.

In 1883 when Fraser Timms established the ferry at the River, the trail was laid out by an old Indian woman who walked ahead of the wagons coming down from Battleford for freight at Swift Current. Although government surveyors tried to find a better trail and crossing up and down the River, they finally had to agree the old Indian woman's trail was the best.

Everybody was a Yahoo

Intertwined with the earlier history of Swift Current were, of course, many of the settlers of this widespread district. And what a lot of characters there were among them; characters in the sense that they were distinguished in some quality. What a privilege to have known many of them.

For instance, take Rev. D. J. Sykes. Here was an early counterpart of famous Tommy Douglas, the CCF-NDP firebrand. Mr. Sykes dropped off from the States here in April, 1904, with two carloads of settlers effects. For years he farmed at the top of the hill, south on the old No. 4 Highway.

He was a very short man like Tommy, a fiery preacher and just as fiery a politician, for he eventually became a member of the legislature for Swift Current. And his arrival was heralded by a heavy snowstorm which covered the Swift Current area (April 27). One daughter married Eddie Glaister, son of Bill Glaister who ran a cartage business for years. Gladys, a belle of the day, married a famous surgeon of Chicago, Dr. Berkheiser.

Unloading his settlers effects about the same time was one guy who really enlivened the streets of Swift Current in his day. Harry (Buckeye) Rosenbury, from Leipsic, Ohio, who took up a farm north along No. 4. He was an exceptionally tall guy, with a hawk nose. Harry was an inveterate bettor, and always put his money on the short end. And he was awfully lucky to the dismay of the local gambling wise-guys. When in the liquid mood, Harry called everybody a "Yahoo."

Shortly after I was married in 1926, I took my new bride into Buster Wah's Venice cafe. In walked Harry, called me a Yahoo and took my bride's nice new hat off, put it on his head, left his, and walked out with a contented silly smile on his face. He was the last farmer to use mules in the district for farming operations.

Magistrate J. T. Dodds, a one-armed gentleman, had a history of civic affairs going back before 1900. He was a very fine gentleman, was J. T. and I knew him well. He taught school here back in 1900 and thereafter, and was also the first secretary-treasurer of the Swift Current School Board. J. T. after the first world war and the new court house and judicial district came into being, was Clerk of the Court, and for us young law students an estimable, friendly and courtly fellow to deal with.

Back in 1949 the Sun published a picture of a group of 1904 pioneers who held a gathering here. Among those I haven't mentioned yet, were farmers so well known in town as Bill Hoff, Lon Quimby, Louis Sackett, Charlie Wright, A. Romanowski, Date Roney, Walter Krinke and John Grinder. The latter a very fine citizen and member of earlier town councils, raised a fine family. I think if I remember right he built that big home on Central now occupied by the Rooneys. The two sons, Sonny (now in Vancouver) and Hy Grinder both played on local hockey clubs; and five beautiful daughters, Mildred (Mrs. A. L. McKenzie), Jose, Nina (the late Mrs. Jim Borthwick) and Anna who married Howard Day, lately retired as chief legal council for the Toronto Transportation Corporation.

Most of Swift Current's activity in the early 1900's revolved around the block opposite the depot, and one of the little frame shacks was built in '03 by the Denny Land Co. In 1906 it became our first bank, the Union Bank, and the first manager was a real live character, Jake Hislop. The manager and teller were fenced in by chicken wire, not like the modern teller's cages.

I've been told that J. K. (who was still around when I came on the scene) prized greatly a polished human skull which he kept on his desk. Every once in a while J. K. would saunter into the Alex or Imperial bar, plank down the skull with a bang and yell "set 'em up". Later Mr. Hislop was quite active in promoting a Board of Trade — in effect he was a real booster.

Items in the Swift Current Daily Express, 1912: "Realtor Bill Mountain advertising 100-foot corner lots west of hospital at \$25 a foot—The CPR is abandoning its proposal for a line from Swift Current to Bassano, Alta. . . . Victor Gramophone and 60 records for sale at \$60."

This is a strange old world. Recently in a column I tried to recall people who had been in Swift Current in the early days and came to some national recognition. One I forgot. Around 1911-12, a young American boy came to town to stay with his uncle (whose name I can't recall) but was an engineer installing some sort of town equipment. We became buddies, used to take walks out south on the prairies, etc. He left and I forgot all about him.

Then, around 1942, I got a letter on New York University stationery, one of the largest U's in the world. It was marked "Office of the Vice-Chancellor," and signed Harold Voorhis. This was the boy I refer to. So, for some years, until his retirement, we corresponded periodically. I'll bet no one else in Swift Current remembers him.

By chance one day, he wrote, in the U library was a copy of the S.C. Sun, and on the masthead my name as editor. "Was I his old friend?" Among some of the things he has written which stand out in his career, (1) On a trip to Europe "an interesting private talk with Premier Benito Mussolini". (2) His presentation of the Holland Society Medal in New York to FBI head man, J. Edgar Hoover.

I just want to mention a little excerpt from one of Harold's letters which may interest young fellows who think they have all the answers to getting ahead in this world: "I left Swift Current soon after the time when the engineering work (of his uncle, I presume) was curtailed on account of wartime necessities, and travelled with a motley gang in a prairie schooner, behind a team of mules, down into Montana. For nearly a year I wandered all over the Rocky Mountain states up and down the Pacific Coast, working a while at this and that, broadening my experiences in a good many directions,

and laying aside something now and then toward college expenses." Well, he became vice-chancellor of NYU.

Many Eating Places

Eating places through the years have been part of the history of this community, way back to the first so-called cafe run by Lee Chang. Names were international in scope, like "The Baltimore", "Togo", "The Gem", "The Mint", you name it we had it. Yee Gee was an early well known restaurateur, Quon Poy, that good looking slick fellow, the Quons, father and son at the Canada, corner central and Cheadle; Tall Henry Wong at the Regal; Jim Wah, a soft-spoken gentleman, father of Buster Wah of the Venice, who became one of the best known in the whole area, and for years catered to the coffee crowd, and with him was Val Thing who now runs a place in Vancouver; and the Greeks, portly Bill Theodoris who held forth at the Modern, and at the Savoy, Mr. Spiropoulos, and Andy Golfin, who donated a golf cup for ladies, maybe still in play. When Andy died, I think it was the biggest funeral I've ever seen in Swift Current. And the Dennis brothers who ran the Picadilly around where Shogans is now or beside it, great sport supporters.

And when you look at the Carleton Apartments on 1st West—there is history. Nothing like it in Western Canada when it was built as the First World War clouds blackened. Built by Jack Bertin, a cocky little English gentleman, who claimed "Swift Current was going to be the Chicago of Canada." It had an elevator, a lounge out of this world, and an orchestra for Sunday dinners. It was really something and many used to come and eat in formal dress.

Believe it or not: An old menu for Sunday dinner, Jan. 18, 1914. For 75 cents: Celery, Salted Almonds, Olives, Soups, Consomme Jardiniere, Cream of New Tomato, Crab Meat a la Maryland, Braised Veal Chops a la Colbert, Baked Apples with Rice, Roast Prime Ribs of Beef Au Jus, Roast Suckling Pig, Roast Young Turkey with Apple Butter Sauce, Oyster Dressing, Potatoes Parisienne, New Cauliflower in Cream, Egg Salad, Chocolate Pie, Assorted Cakes, Steamed Plum Pudding with Hard Sauce, Strawberry Ice Cream, Drinks. (Drool, my friends, this was Swift Current!) And folks had money to spend on eating. Why, in 1914 there were as many as 27 insurance agents operating in Swift Current. That's affluence.

The Carleton Hotel was later acquired by Mike Healy, for some years in the theatre business with Jack Lundholm, who, by the way, came here before the first war as an electrician. Later it was bought by J. A. Rollefson, whose place of business was on Second West, a well-known citizen who served as alderman and mayor in his day. Mr. Rollefson was another of Norway's contribution to Swift Current via the USA.

We've had a host of wonderful folk from Norway and Sweden in this area, particularly out north in districts like Ruskin, Leinan, Stewart Valley, Sask. Landing, and from the latter place former Reeve Sophus Grant. Out north we had successful farmers like Leinans, Knapps, Nicodemus, the R.B. Stewart family, Scotts, Thistlethwaites, McConnells, B. Campbells, Kings, Nybos, Murches and others.

A sidenote: after the First War the ground floor of the Carleton became a co-operative dwelling for a group of young business men, with housekeeper and all. I was among them for a while.

Health Region and Doctors

Saskatchewan's Medical Care Insurance Plan, in effect since 1961, was unique in North America. But what many new comers may not know is that Swift Current and the region surrounding had the pilot plan for the whole scheme, inaugurated in 1946; thus pioneered the whole business. We had a plebiscite and it carried. Plebiscites in other regions of Saskatchewan lost, mainly because of opposition to the land tax, which was to be part of financing the services. What Swift Current folks did, in okaying the plan, was the finest bit of pioneering in the province's history.

It will be recalled that in 1944, Tommy Douglas's CCF government was elected to power with this promise: "To set up a complete system of socialized health services with special emphasis on preventive medicine, so that everybody will receive adequate medical surgical, dental, nursing and hospital care without charge." Of course we all know that while the idea was wonderful, nobody gets anything for nothing. However the basic idea of the CCF was sound and did work out—when the nothingness had to be foregone. However the success of Swift Current Health Region No. 1 made possible the province-wide scheme.

Regardless of the new compulsory province-wide scheme, Swift Current Region No. 1 was allowed to continue to be operated by a Board from the grassroots; levies its own personal tax for medical care.

Throughout the organization and subsequently, Stewart Robertson of Swift Current, was the secretary-treasurer, and when MCI came in province-wide he was appointed to the Commission. A very efficient secretary, was Stewart Robertson. But, in addition to this, he has been a valuable citizen in his support of many of the city's activities. The Medical Health Officer is always located in Swift Current head offices.

The Swift Current Plan has come through some changes, such as utilization fees, etc., but on the whole it has done what it set out to do, give prime medical care for all people of the Region and I think doctors have been eminently satisfied, or I think should be . . . no unpaid bills any more. The Region embraces an area of 15,000 square miles in the extreme southwest corner of Saskatchewan. The estimated population back in 1963 as I recall was round 56,000.

Which all brings to mind some history of doctors in Swift Current through the years, as I remember them. Have mentioned previously, Swift Current's first practicing doctor, Dr. W. H. Field (1903) and what a career he had in the community. For some years he ministered to the little community, ranchers and farmers everywhere. Often behind his cutter, off in a blizzard with a Mountie beside him. Golfer, curler, civic leader. I guess of all the earlier doctors the only one around in 1969 was the late Dr. Oscar M. Irwin, and a local school rightfully bears his distinguished name.

After Dr. Field came Dr. Louis Hoppin, greying, with a Van Dyke beard. I think he married a Mrs. Grimason who used to run the old CPR

dining hall a few years after the railway had come here. What a buzz in the community when Doc Hoppin was found one morning, dead, in the basement of the Yager block. Things got busy around 1907 and Dr. Field brought in Dr. A. E. Kelly who was around for quite a while, finished as town health officer.

Then there was Dr. MacArthur, the rotund, jolly medico who always had an off-beat story (for those days) when you met him on the street. The MacArthurs (or Mrs.) were socially inclined, had musical soirees, and as late as after World War I had parties where the men went in tie and tails. They had the big house on Dufferin just east of the MacWilliams Apartments. And the only ones here to ever build a big glass enclosed conservatory as part of the home. In after years that spacious home was owned by the Gordon Coopers, the Herb Cathreas, the Dr. Dowsleys, O. E. Thompsons, Geo. Brasnetts and then Dr. Strother Stewart.

Then along around 1918 came the new Swift Current Clinic on Central, with Dr. O. M. Irwin, Dr. Graham, Dr. Roy Stirrett, Dr. Jim Sharpe, Dr. Willard Thurston. And then there was Dr. H. C. Burroughs, who lived in the former big home built by Huff Powley on Dufferin and Dr. Kelso C. Cairns. A doctor who practised earlier at the time of Burroughs and Cairns was a Dr. Donald Ross. He was CPR physician here. He moved to Los Angeles, and pioneered California's first co-operative medical plan, and became a reputably very wealthy man after establishing the famous Ross-Loos Clinic, first of its kind.

I'll never forget when I enlisted in World War I. Had to get a medical. Went to Doc Cairns, who often enjoyed a nip. He looked at me and said "How do you feel, Jim?" "Fine," the young Jim said. "You're passed as fit for the army," sez he, and signed the papers. Simple.

Story of the Turkey Track

I think that in some 35 years editing a newspaper here I got most of my material from old timers direct, mainly. Always was thrilled with stories of the old ranching and cattle country that it was. The Matador and Turkey Track ranches were legendary. I once got the real story of the Turkey Track from J. F. MacCallum, who was here when this was part of the Territory of Assiniboia, the Old West.

Mac said that the Turkey Track was a cattle outfit owned by Day and Criswell, with ranches in Texas and South Dakota. Tony Day was the cattle man. (I used to see him when a boy). Criswell was a miner who had struck it rich in South Dakota and they formed a partnership. Their brand was the print of a turkey's foot, hence the Turkey Track.

In the year 1901 some of the officials came across into Canada looking for a location to graze cattle and they contacted Hugh Maguire, an old 76 ranch cowpuncher, and they employed him to show them the country. They picked the spot for the home ranch a few miles south and east of where Braddock now stands. There was an abundance of grass, water and shelter. Mr. Maguire I know a few years ago was still living in Shaunavon. After picking the spot for the home ranch, they moved stock right away from South Dakota across the country to this location in the districts where Braddock and Hallonquist now stand.

In 1902-03 they shipped trainloads of cattle from Texas to Canada, unloading them at Waldeck, which was the nearest shipping point of that period. The winters proved too severe in Canada for these cattle from the southern States, and the venture did not prove to be a success. So they sold out. Cruickshanks and Simpson of Moose Jaw bought the remnants of the horses and cattle and ran the place for a few years, later selling to Percy Ostrander, who until a few years ago I know, still lived on the old original location raising cattle.

Col. Milward Yates, first Sun owner and editor, relates in his memoirs that when he came from England in 1901, he first met Bob Cruickshank in Moose Jaw and went to work for him that winter on the ranch at Log Valley, north of Herbert, then came into Swift Current. Yates recalls that there was no hotel then in Swift Current only the old CPR Dining Hall run by Fanny Powell. There were only limited rooms or beds in the place. You either stayed there, or if you were out of luck Charlie Reid would let you bunk down over his little store where he had piles of Hudsons Bay blankets.

I never tire of writing about this fantastic character, Yates, still living in 1969 in Victoria at 92. Here are a few of highlights of his life, I think hitherto unpublished.

He thinks he's the only one still living who attended the funeral of Gladstone, Prime Minister of England, who I think was successor to the great Disraeli. Yates' father was a personal friend of Gladstone, and insisted his young son go with him to the state funeral and they were in the official entourage.

He was arrested in Las Palmas as an American spy around the time of the Spanish American War. Was in the Boer War, met Winston Churchill there.

When he was badly wounded in World War I, he was the first to have successful plastic surgery on his face. It was very noticeable of course when he returned to Swift Current. At one time, as he himself relates, he was consigned to an insane asylum, "but never reached it owing to my own machinations." When wounded he was put in the morgue as dead; was saved by a nurses aide and given six months to live. That was around 1914-15.

Another fine old character who used to pound the side-walks of Swift Current was Mike Murphy, who had a shack along Railway Street near the east end crossing. Mike was more Irish than the Irish. A little wizened guy with the map of Ireland on his face, his brogue was so delightful and his vocabulary so quaint. Mike even wore strings under his knees over his pants as they used to in the Ould Sod. Never knew his history, but loved to chat with him on the street.

The other day heard of Ken Mayhew, who now operates a flower shop here in Vancouver. Well, Ken was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Geoff Mayhew, well known residents at one time. Ken was tall, lithe and handsome and became a fine artistic dancer, who later teamed up in an act with a young lady from the coast city, named Yvonne De Carlo, who became a famous movie star many of you have seen in films. Ken's mother was of the Ford family, who came from the States to farm around Beverley first. One brother Gene Ford, pitched for the Detroit Tigers when Ty Cobb broke-in, another with the old New York Yankees. Walter, also a professional pitcher who played quite a bit around Swift Current for a while.

Churches We Had Here

Men of distinction, they didn't all need to be bankers, lawyers, etc., around here to deserve mention by this writer. A familiar figure around town for years was George Torrans, who homesteaded at Elrose in 1905 then to Swift Current in 1909, was a blacksmith here, then had a livery stable, and in later years had the contract for carrying mail between Stewart Valley and here. When George passed on in 1955, he was survived by 10 daughters and three sons, and two sons had predeceased him. That's 15. A nice man was George, to everybody, lived in Ashley Park.

Still wake up at night and remembered other Currentonians who made it big: Bill Genereaux, who went to school here, then moved to Saskatoon as an eye, ear and nose specialist. His son George, topped the world at trap-shooting at the 1952 Olympic Games, about the only Canadian athlete to hit the jackpot. Bill's dad (and the father of Mrs. Joe Fownes) was Inspector J. H. Genereaux of the Mounties who served in that force from 1866 to 1919, retired and lived here until his death in 1925. Insp. Genereaux was part of the contingent which attended the coronation of King Edward VII.

Sport item in the local Daily Express, May 2, 1912: The school baseball team beat southsiders 13-1. Jack McTaggart and Gordon Buttery (later dentist here) starred for winners, the latter pitching four innings, relieved by Jim Greenblat."

When the new Anglican Church was built at Cheadle and Second E. in the fifties, it really was a change from the old to the new in our religious history. Way back when, of course, the No. 1 was this church, that little frame edifice on Railway. But it had history. The first Church of England service—or any for that matter—was held here at the time of the Riel Rebellion in 1885, when troops detrained for the march northward, and a service was held for them about where the CPR depot is. Rev. George Lloyd, later fourth Lord Bishop of Qu'Appelle officiated.

The first resident parish priest was Rev. G. Stilwell in 1903. I remember him quite well after I came here. This vicar was a kindly English gentleman, and everybody in the community really loved that man. He built his own vicarage with the help of his wife, assisted by John Furnis. The Presbyterians built and dedicated their first little church on Railway also in 1889, moving up to the nice big brick church at Chaplin and Fourth West about 1913.

The Catholic church has a long history in Swift Current, and one of the earliest to head the congregation was Rev. Father F. Cabanel. Old timers won't forget Fr. Cabanel, a very broad-minded cleric, kindly, friendly and hail-fellow-well-met with everybody. I used to get letters from him written by a nurse when he was retired and totally blind in a hostel in St. Boniface, Manitoba. He was succeeded by Fr. Mondor. He had a delightful French accent.

Through the years I recall many popular ministers of the faith here. There was Rev. H. C. Speller of the Baptist Church, Rev. R. W. Dalglish, old timer, and Rev. Frank Forster who went overseas with the 209th battalion, Rev. W. A. Guy of the Knox Church, a grand orator and man about town. Rev. C. S. Elsey, Rev. R. J. Russell, Rev. D. Nicol, Rev. Endicott, Rev. Ranns Rev. Rien of Mount Calvary church, one of the best first basemen ever to play on a Swift Current team. Quite a little Jewish community at one time.

but no rabbi; they held high holidays up in the Masonic Hall and brought in the preacher from Regina or Moose Jaw.

Then there was the old Methodist Church across from the old Collegiate, in which only the basement was ever finished and for years served as the police station. Inspector Roy Hart will remember the days in that old joint. However, when I came here as a boy, it was used a lot by the travelling Holy Roller sect which put on big rallies there periodically. We kids used to go to watch antics, the rolling and the shouting of the "converts" there. As we had no radio or TV those days, anything went for entertainment and everybody flocked there. Besides, the Holy Rollers were next door to the Roller Skating Rink, and that bit of information wasn't intended as a pun.

A church conundrum so far as I am concerned; Mrs. Mable Hutchinson Vance of a pioneer family once sent me an old program of the "Swift Current Union Sunday School Christmas Concert" dated Thursday, December 30, 1897, at 1930 o'clock, which indicated a CPR fellow must have typed the program. The ministers noted were Revs. Lawson, Cunliffe and Anderson. Asst. Supt. William Milburn, and secretary, E. Cooper (Ted) who in my day ran the ice rink on Fifth East. The Pattersons had a furniture store then and were the town undertakers. So possibly this may have been a joint effort of the few churches here.

Barbers and Things

A little pot-pourri this week: Talk about longevity in the local business world, I think there's one fellow in Swift Current who deserves mention too. He's my old friend, Charlie Skeates, who was tonsorial artist with Steve Marzek in the Healy Booker block, now the Professional Building. Outside of a break in the first war, Charles has been making hair look neat here for over half a century and that's quite a record. He first was cutting hair and shaving in the new Healy Hotel, and when the 209th battalion was organized here he joined and went overseas with them. He started as a bandsman and was active in band work here after the war.

I went overseas with the 46th, a Moose Jaw unit, and strangely enough one day in France a reinforcement detachment arrived and lo and behold there was Charlie Skeates and Phil Hauck, the latter of the S.C. police force. They were assigned to my platoon.

One day in 1918 when we had dug in during a bombardment, Charlie and I lay tight together in a shallow hole when a piece of shrapnel cut through his lip, and I was left alone. Charlie has always been a prankster. One day out of the line, he proceeded to give me a haircut, clipping half my head to the scalp and refusing to do the rest. That was worth a laugh. Quite a guy. Charlie married a nurse in the local hospital.

In the early days, of course, in a town the size of Swift Current the barber shop was always the gathering place of the sports around town. Guess the earliest barber I recall was H. E. Clinite, who became first president of the first agricultural society. The Healy shop had one character, the owner. Friday Gallagher was his name, and in his shop for some time also worked Jasper Hart, a very estimable and amiable gentleman, father of Roy Hart of the City Police. And Bill Yager became a barber after he had been Sheriff of this judicial district.

I remember when the Healy shop first opened they had a young colored fellow who had the shoe shine stand. Between shines he always seemed to be munching pig's knuckles, set aside on a piece of paper.

Shoe shining was quite a profession in earlier years, even in the frontier town we lived in. Gus Gillalis, a Greek, had a shoe shine place just north of Pioneer Co-op store on Central. Gus did pretty well, later owned the Avenue Hotel on First East, acquired real estate and worldly goods and moved to Vancouver where he invested too. I met him not long ago, but he has since passed on. I guess it was 40 years ago that Gus was involved in a case, which divided the community. One day his old car struck the rear of old Dad Perry's sulky and race horse which he used to drive around the street when not on the race track. This was on Central near Bradbrooke's. It proved fatal for Mr. Perry. It was an accident of course, but there was some apparent dubious evidence given against Gus. Gus wasn't a roughneck at all, and many were of the opinion he was railroaded.

I guess, so far as Swift Current is concerned, no year was so exciting and propitious for the future as 1912. The old files exhude excitement, for the building boom and the rush of settlers had been coming to a peak. Through it all, of course, the Canadian Pacific Railway was a big factor and as a major divisional point contributed much to the town's development. Many of its employees became forefront citizens.

In 1907, for example the payroll here was about \$5,000 a month; by 1953 had risen to over a million dollars a year. In 1912, the CPR boys were already planning their third annual ball to take place in the Magic theatre on First East (what a joint!). That year the town papers were triumphantly writing that the city waterworks was now in good operation. The ponderous Toronto Financial Post was writing that Swift Current, hitherto a "sleepy village was now up and coming" . . . that some guy had paid \$100,000 for a quarter section of land near there . . . and that already in the 1912 season a million bushels of land had been marketed.

A number of the men who came here in official CPR capacities in the early days such as station agents and telegraphers became part of the community. Many of them I knew well. I didn't of course know men like Larry Tallman, in latter years agent at Taber, Alta., but who worked under agent Alex Yager 1905-08. Mr. Yager built the block now the Health Region on Cheadle, and his brother Bill became Sheriff of the judicial district. Mr. Tallman's son Ed has been in Swift Current many years in charge of the Radio Range station, an active citizen in many fields.

There was Tom Dohan, CP agent, who went into real estate successfully, built the first Woolworth store, served on town councils.

Dick Richards was the longest time agent, coming here in 1912 to open the first "city" ticket office. And there was a Mr. Stiff and a Mr. Coons who handled telegraph keys. And not many know that John McIntosh, father of our M.P. (Jack) came in 1910 to be assistant agent to Tom Dohan and paymaster for the CPR here.

He Wanted a New Flag

The new Canadian flag is not any phenomenon in our history so to speak. One of the most persistent proponents in Canada in the past half century was

right in Swift Current. A little sandy haired, spectacled photographer named F. G. Westlake.

The corner on Central and Chaplin, where Eatons built their store, was once a big vacant lot. Everybody used it instead of going around the sidewalk corner. At the south end on Central was F. G.'s studio. He had two aims in life: (1) a new flag for Canada. (2) To boost Swift Current as one of Canada's most progressive coming cities.

However, the flag was an obsession. He belonged to the Native Sons of Canada, once a strong organization and a dedicated one. He pestered Ottawa all his living days, as well as members of Parliament. He designed thousands of flags which were all submitted to the parliamentary committee which sat on its tail for nearly a century before doing anything.

It was a tragedy that F. G. died before the new flag came on the scene. Maybe he knows about it, wherever he is. I only had one thing against Mr. Westlake. His pet terrier and constant companion once bit me on the leg right at the studio door. Many people didn't blame the dog much.

Among his other services Mr. Westlake was an alderman and was instrumental in developing Elm Park near the creek at the foot of Chaplin Street.

We had another very dedicated photographer in the earlier days, Albert Goodman who had a studio west of the Healy hotel, where there's now a dental clinic started by Doc Jim Whyte. Mr. Goodman, a rosy-faced pincenezed Englishman, whose accent I admired, was a real pro at pictures, and son Johnny Goodman carried on his work, later at a studio across from the new post office.

Oil and gas in the Swift Current area is now old hat, but it wasn't always old hat or just a dream. Well it wasn't a dream to old Cy Newell, who farmed north west of Swift Current towards Cantaur. Cy was a skinny little guy, who drove everybody crazy with his notion that there was "oil in them thar hills." Way back in the early 1920's, when I started in with the old Herald after the war, Cy Newell pestered me about oil on his land. One day I drove out and Cy took me out to the slough back of his barn, told me to put my hand in. Sure enough, the residue was distinctly oily. Old Cy wasn't a prophet in his own land. But he knew what he was talking about even tho' folks thought he was off his rocker for his persistency. Nearly 30 years later he was vindicated, but alas, too late for Cy, just like for Mr. Westlake.

I often think of the many distinguished men who trod Swift Current soil, even though momentarily. I remember when the famous Teddy Roosevelt, who was US president from 1901-05, came through Swift Current on a train just after the First War started. There was a terrifically immense and patriotic crowd at the depot, and they pulled Teddy onto a baggage cart where he stood and blasted the hell out of Kaiser Wilhelm. With his famous big mustache, big teeth, square glasses and belligerent mien, he was a very famous character of that era, the first "Roughrider," years ahead of the Saskatchewan football team.

Political characters we saw in Swift Current thru the years included: Bill Aberhart, the first Canadian Social Creditor. The portly, crowd rousing orator held forth at the old Methodist church to an overflow meeting. Talk about a spellbinder! No wonder he turned the province of Alberta topsy turvey for a while, and chilled the hearts of bankers.

Another political campaigner, one of the finest orators I've ever heard, was R. B. Bennett of Calgary, who became Prime Minister of Canada and

ended up in the nobility in England. It was at a Swift Current meeting he made the now famous declaration about the Liberals, "They've had their day, and ceased to be."

R. B. had the misfortune to be at the helm during the Depression and Dirty Thirties.

In our day there we've seen such luminaries as the Prince of Wales, the one who married Wally Simpson; Lord Byng of Vimy, Vincent Massey, when he became first Canadian-born Governor General. Good old Diefenbaker, the ebullient Tommy Douglas on many occasions; the Archbishop of Canterbury, who when his train started up, was so overwhelmed by hand-shakers at the depot that he had to dash up the platform at high speed with his clerical robes streaming in the breeze behind him.

I wrote a somewhat funny column about all this, which came to His Lordship's attention. He asked the CPR to get him several copies (and we gladly obliged) for their Public Relations Department.

And don't forget, you newer folks, that Woodrow Lloyd, who followed Tommy Douglas as Premier of Saskatchewan, was from the Webb district. The family had nearly a whole team of ballplayers which we played against often. Woodrow taught for years in this district. In the early thirties Swift Current was represented in Ottawa by a farmer, Rev. A. J. Lewis, for one term. He got nation-wide publicity by walking into the staid old House of Commons in a pair of white "ice cream pants," the first to ever break tradition in this manner. William Lyon Mackenzie King nearly flipped his lid, as much as he had.

The Guy Gets Engaged

I often think that folks who lived in the earlier days in virtual frontier communities like Swift Current enjoyed something that has to be non-existent now; a sense of togetherness, a sense of responsibility for one's neighbor, a sense of patriotism for their country for which they brooked no apologies. There were few people who had big money as we know it today, or any substantial affluence. And hard work wasn't a dirty word. People could laugh and enjoy jokes which weren't sexy.

I think that great period in Western Canadian history ended with the end of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl days. As I look back I deem it a great and wonderful privilege to have participated in it and recorded it in many words. Maybe the kids who will be us in 50 years may say the same thing, but I doubt it.

Don't get me wrong, we used to sometimes get a little bottle of straight alcohol and mix it with lemon sour for a kick; but the present affluent society with its many advantages has not got the "something" that used to be a whole lot in the way of living. Life is getting too mixed-up and impersonal now.

I've got to get a little personal to illustrate. In the 20's when I edited the Herald for Carey and Corbett, the shop was opposite the Lyric theatre. I became engaged to a girl — naturally. So what happened? the male population — and everybody knew everybody in this place of some 6 or 7 thousand souls — descended one afternoon to celebrate my engagement. They drank a little of course, started midday crap games on the ink blackened presses, on the oily floors and lots of staid citizens went home a little late for supper. Fellows like

Tom Dohan, Frank West, Jack Lundholm, Ernie Dodds and others I remember had more ink on them than next week's edition.

Then a little later when I married that girl in Dauphin, Man., and returned on the train, the depot was packed with hundreds of people who flocked to see the fun. There was a second hand dealer named "Happy Jack" on Central. He drove a dilapidated buggy and mule. So they hired Happy Jack to take the bridal couple up Central behind the mule, followed by a procession of cars, carts and everything. The innocent bride could have died with mortification. She later got well used to Swift Current. But what a parade.

It wasn't just Jim Greenblat, a newspaperman. It was a chance to have fun, western style. And the wedding party held forth at Mr. and Mrs. Cathrea's, in the big home on North Hill that Doc MacArthur had lived in. And Mike Healy, the theatre impresario refusing to go home at near sunlight until everyone had gone to bed. And the bridal bed had been fixed and it fell apart. Those were the days in Swift Current.

Talking of the fun days, even away from the Frontier Days, towards modernity. After the First War for a while there were quite a number of lawyers who had offices in the upper story of what is now the Health Region building. I was in Bothwell and Campbell's for a while, and there was also lawyer G. C. Thomson, whom we've written about. Also an English lawyer whose name was W. A. Lucas.

This I saw with my own eyes one Saturday afternoon, when business was quiet and even lawyers relaxed. A client of some sort came in and asked Mr. Lucas to notarize something or other. Mr. Lucas wasn't suffering any, and he said to the man, "Raise your right leg and swear this is true." The man did. And the legal act was consummated. Folks may have been nutty but they were sweet.

This week we may as well finish on a "Fun" note, get down to serious things. There was a time when Hy Wodlinger had his store where Christie Grants now is, and before that Jack and Ben Wood held forth. Anyway one Saturday night Hy gave a party at his house at Third and Dufferin. Stag, that is, because Rose was away. Anyway a famous local journalist got a few too many and passed out on the parlour floor. Mind you, these were all the male pillars of our local society! So they put a sheet over him, placed lighted candles around him on the floor —and waited. As sunlight flooded in, the guy awoke, struggled to open his eyes, took in the scene and nearly really passed out. Later in the morning the pseudo corpse was seen weaving down Third East, holding an open umbrella. It wasn't raining and it wasn't me.

Oldtimers will always remember Big Bill Shields, who was a very familiar figure on our streets in earlier days. Bill was quite a Liberal politician and had been homestead inspector and farmer. Bill was big, huge, must have weighed at least 250. Anyway Bill, who hadn't been off the prairies in his life, enlisted in Swift Current's 209th Battalion in The War. When the 209th got on the troop ship at Halifax and then out into the ocean and no land in sight, he stood at the rail and said to all and sundry, "Some Slough, Some Slough". In wonderment at the immensity of nature.

Russians Speak Russian

The old saying goes that kings and captains get all the publicity. That's maybe true, but sometimes the little people have most interesting stories too.

Take for example, the father of our member of Parliament, Jack McIntosh. Jack, whom I've known since he was a boy, doesn't hide his light behind a bushel. He says what he thinks, let the chips fall where they may. That makes him an interesting M.P.

But Jack's dad. John was a quiet, short, pipe-puffing, unobtrusive gentleman, but as a Scot you couldn't push him around. He served in his quiet way on city council and was a member of the Board of Supervisors in Swift Current's worst financial days. Few knew, however, that he had stormy days too. Came here in 1910 as CPR paymaster and assistant agent. He was a member of the delegation of CP workers who lost a bitter strike in 1913 and went to Ottawa for the negotiations. Knowing he was a marked man, so far as his advancement was concerned, he left the railway.

At that time the McIntosh's lived in a little frame house at Railway and 1st where Beaver Lumber now is, next to Furnis' livery barn which he later bought and ran for several years. Did a little horse trading and real estate. John held a commission in the old 14th Light Horse here, but he didn't get to war because of an accident to his leg.

He was one of those in Swift Current who invested heavily in Florida land in the early boom days and was one of the first local families to move there to settle. He quickly tumbled to the whole venture and sent a telegram to other local residents to stay put. He then bought a hotel in Tampa, Florida (on Main street), probably worth trillions now, but sold out.

He was held up and stabbed in Tampa, decided to go farming, had dry years, lost plenty. He then returned to Swift Current and became credit manager for Swift Current Grocery (Nash Symington). Then he bought out Sam Davidner's furniture store on Central Ave. Sam who was on council too, ended up at Prince Albert where he has been in business. Quite a story for a Scotsman who came to Swift Current in 1910.

We've never had many Negro people in Swift Current, guess we were too far inland and the cold winters were no attraction for folks used to warmer climes. However for many years since the turn of the century we've had an estimable family farming just southwest of Swift Current along the creek. That was a colored gentleman named Joe Carruthers—and he was a fine gentleman, liked and respected by all. Joe had come here I think from Texas with the early cattle barons and was with the Matador ranch outfit. They raised a nice family out there.

Incidents to remember. I think it was sometime in the 40's when L. B. Thomson was superintendent of the Dominion Experimental Farm here, or maybe it could have been Grant Denike who succeeded him. If he wasn't at the station, L.B. could have been director of the PFRA for Canada. Anyway I remember him making arrangements when the first delegation of Russian agricultural experts from the Soviet came out here to visit the experimental farm. It had been arranged that they would be taken out to the new Matador farming co-operative, northeast of Swift Current, and sit in on a meeting of the Board.

I had to report things about the Russians but knew that even though some spoke English to a degree, that it always had to be an interpreter giving the answers, rightly or wrongly. There was a young ex-Russian working for Jim Alexander at his plumbing shop on First West, across from where the Legion is now. I got him to act as the chauffeur of my car and we arranged to have three of the Soviet fellows in my car as part of the entourage.

During the whole day, my chauffeur was able to get all the conversation which went on—and some of it was “Ver-ry interesting” I got my story of how the Russians felt about our country, our agricultural methods, etc. A dirty trick, but “very interesting”.

I think the two most interesting periods in Swift Current's history, community wise, came in the 1912 boom days and that period, a few years after the end of the first war. No wonder settlers flocked in. A report from Winnipeg in the spring was that 165,876 new homesteads would be available that year for the prairie provinces.

A social note in one issue of the Daily Express in November: “Jessie and Nan Ribelin gave an enjoyable farewell party the other night prior to leaving for their homestead.”

Ed Miller was manager of the Reliance hotel those days, a hail fellow well met, who in later years went totally blind, but despite that was one of the most active men in the town. I remember when I joined the Knights of Pythias lodge, Ed gave the principle degree ritual, all from memory.

T'was in Hitler's Time

We've been doing quite a bit of writing about the days over a half century ago . . . now for a brief divergence, let's look at what was interesting local folk a quarter of a century ago: A. D. Hitler, 1944 . . . an old comrade of mine from the France days, Ald. Harry Gibbs won the provincial Swift Current seat for the C.C.F. Harry came here from Moose Jaw *apres la guerre*, was boilermaker at CPR; a controversial Lancashire born lad, whose booming voice dominated civic and political circles for a long time . . . in June a farewell for a well known minister of Metropolitan church, Rev. H. D. Ranns, going East . . . Grant Denike of Experimental farm became Rotary president . . . a sad end to an old story when the old 76 ranch building on southside, last of its kind, sold by the city for \$515.

In July 1944 reported that Capt. Harry Dickson, son of Frank and Mrs. Dickson was first medico to hit the beaches in Normandy invasion; then in August word of his being killed in action. Harry was a S.C.C.I. graduate, was on the way to becoming, among other things, a top-flight golfer . . . Bob Moore of The Sun new president of Saskatchewan Weekly Newspaper Association . . . Capt. Doug McKenzie mentioned in despatches and Capt. Doug Cameron awarded Military Cross. Swift Current's first feeder show sold 200 cattle for \$10,500 . . . distribution of No. 5 Wartime Ration books and 6,279 were issued to Swift Current people . . . Dr. O. M. Irwin used penicillin here for the first time . . . Flying Officer Bill Corbett, son of local newsman Gren Corbett, decorated with Distinguished Flying Cross . . . Ald. Hansen and Ken Rutherford announced as candidates for mayoralty; Ken won, and aldermen were Jim Aitken, J. E. Friesen, Bob Dahl, Hank Day and Harold Baldwin. Swift Current Flour Mills shipped overseas 7,272,000 lbs. of flour in 1944 . . . W. H. Belbeck, Swift Current oldest citizen, father of newsman Dave Belbeck, passed on at 95 years, last person to die in the old hospital.

Back to the past. To those of us who were in Swift Current for many years, it does seem strange to think that the Dominion Experimental station came into being in Swift Current 48 years ago (1921), nearly half a century. For the farmers of a far flung area it was to prove a veritable bonanza; for the

community the impact was tremendous, for through those years officers and staff have played a very important role. They came and went, but they revitalized the community socially, culturally and educationally (if that is a good word). To say it simply, The Farm as it was affectionately known, gave us some wonderful people who became dedicated to the community.

Take just one of them who was an assistant superintendent, and we refer to that lovable, kind, gentle and genius of a man. H. J. "Shorty" Kemp, who died later at Sidney, B.C. Harold was a mechanical wizard, who has to his credit some tremendously important developments in making farm machinery more effective. He continued that special job for agriculture since retiring, too. But Shorty also had a great deal to do with the aesthetic side of Swift Current, for he planned and helped create Memorial Park, opposite Citizens rink, a project of the Rotary Club in the initial phases; also the Kiwanis Club park south of the hospital. A very dedicated guy.

There were others: The first superintendent, J. G. Taggart, his story is well known. A community worker, a provincial minister of agriculture after being elected M.L.A. for Swift Current; deputy minister of agriculture federally, and who was appointed to oversee the food business during World War II from Ottawa. Then his great successor, L. B. (Len) Thomson, who had the vision that better methods of farming in a "dry" area would solve many problems. He ignited several irrigation projects, among them Duncairn Dam, which guaranteed feed and fodder in dry years, conceived the vision of PFRA when Jimmy Gardiner was agriculture minister, then became its national director. The forceful Len Thomson, a New Zealander by birth, who worked as a farm laborer when he came to Canada, made a great contribution to the country and the city.

Len was succeeded by Grant Denike, an able administrator who served The Farm for years in the mechanical engineering field. He was also a wonderful community worker, and like Thomson served as president of the Rotary Club, and the Agricultural Fair. Grant also coached our intermediate hockey team when it was among the tops in the west. He is now doing specialized work for the federal department of agriculture and has had missions overseas since moving to Ottawa.

There have been so many great devotees of agriculture connected with The Farm through the years, it is difficult to remember and record them all and their works. Their efforts and achievements on "dry land agriculture" are legion. Summerfallow and other developments for conserving moisture saved this western country of ours, make no mistake.

Among the many dedicated scientists and researchers and administrators who have toiled at The Farm here and worthy of mention are Dr. Clarke, Baden Campbell, Sidney Barnes, noted for his soil moisture research, Earl Eisenhower, John Parker, who went from here to do important reclamation work in the Maritimes, Dr. Lowell Doughty, head of the Soil Research Laboratory, Joe Fitch, Jim Switzer, Peder Myhr, and that popular "man about The Farm", Corny Smith, Stewart McBean, now on the Senate of the University of Saskatchewan.

Many Who Went to War

I think there were two periods of what might be described as "the Golden Days" in Swift Current's history. The first were in the growin' up days, maybe around 1912 to the advent of the First War.

With the building boom and a new type of people coming in, business and professional, and when folks all knew each other by first name, the Canadian identity was newish and compelling. There was plenty of action. There was little juvenile delinquency, or crime of any kind, and mental disturbances in people was a rarity. We still put goose grease on our chests for the common cold, police weren't "pigs" and most people had respect for our laws and institutions. It was a nice time to live. The second Golden Days era in my view, was after the First War, when the boys returned home, glad to be back in civilization, and started to take over the functions of society from the older establishment.

As I look back I wonder where all the civil litigation came from in the district, because there were lawyers, and law students learning how to be lawyers, behind every bush. Just a few off the top of my head: In the Healy Booker Block was Buckles, Donald and MacPherson. Among others either on the way out, or newcomers were Smyth, Begg and Hayes, Bothwell and Campbell, MacWilliam and Cathrea, S. A. Hutcheson and Hysop, Maulson and Potter and later A. B. Elliott, W. Jopp, Henry Wadsworth, G. C. Thomson, W. A. Lucas, A. J. Herder. Of these, graduating in later years to judgeships were lawyers Smyth, Bothwell, Hutcheson, Buckles, MacPherson. Not a bad percentage.

Among the many law students in Swift Current just before the war I remember Jack Mitchell, Bill Miller, Fred Kent, Greenblat. How we could afford to play the odd game of poker I don't recall, but I do know that I was drawing \$20 a month to live on. I got free living quarters for a while in a suite up over Ed McKenzie's new store, making beds and cleaning house for a bunch of the import hockey and ball players. Imagine!

Outside of sports those days—and this was before TV and radio—it didn't take much to entertain people. Of course we could go to, at the time the prime theatre, The Eagle, just north of Coopers on Central, and watch the Perils of Pauline serial, silent as a morgue but with the accompanying music of Dalton Hebb at the piano. Dalton later married Jean Gurney, daughter of a local pioneer family. They are now living in New Westminster. Dad Leach and Ken Leach owned the theatre. Ken, the tallest, skinniest man ever, and a real swell guy, married Edna, his beautiful ticket seller and they moved to Calgary, in the theatre business. They are now among the best known of the elite of that thriving city. Edna came from the Lackey (maybe Leckie) family of Neville. A sister married undertaker O. B. Dreyer.

What I wanted to point out, however, was that simple entertainment was popular. I remember once a debate on "Capital Punishment" held in the basement of Knox Church, and this drew an overflow crowd.

On one side was Lawyer M. A. MacPherson, later attorney-general of Saskatchewan and a judge and one other against Dr. Roy Stirrett and a scared-to-death law student whose first name was Jim. Imagine!

I think that at least 50 per cent of the legal fraternity of that era wound up as participants in the First World War. And they mostly all made considerable contribution to the civic and national life. W. O. Smyth of course was an early editor of The Sun and a judge and took the 209th battalion overseas. J. O. Begg was a long time member and chairman of the school boards, and Fred Hayes was alderman and mayor, and I think I've mentioned beforehand what others contributed.

Take yourself back 57 years. Look down Central Ave., Chaplin or

Cheadle. Checking my files, who do we find were some of the advertisers in the very first (1912) issue of the new Swift Current Daily Express? (situated about where Eatons is now). McCormick, plumber; Bertin's general store on Central; Moote Coal Co., on Railway; McKenzie and Mann, Wigmore's Fair; Monty Moncrieff's general store, Zellar Land Co., Blair and Webber, finance brokers; Pletch's Cash store; Pioneer Lumber; Stoddart the Jeweller; Empress Hotel, rooms \$2.50 and up; Alexandra Hotel, Jack Thornycroft, blacksmith; Lawyer W. E. Jopp, Geo. McDonald, fuel; J. K. Keith, real estate; Booker, Webster and Co., real estate; Edmondson and Betts, butchers; T. M. Irvine, real estate; Western Construction; Yates, real estate. Well, only Wigmore's and McKenzie's remain. Both Thornycroft and Tom Irvine later were with our fire department as chiefs. By the way, the inauguration number of the Daily Express, which didn't survive, was Feb. 19, 1912.

Just an interesting footnote to history here: of the 50,000 people who lived in the Maple Creek-Swift Current federal constituency in 1952 and that's little more than 18 years ago, the melting pot was thus: 40 per cent were of British origin, 11 per cent French, 17 per cent German, 9 per cent Netherlands, 11 per cent Scandinavians, 2 per cent Russian, 4 per cent other European origins and 6 per cent unknown. Wonder what it is today?

About the Postmasters

Recently we mentioned Hugh Corrigan and his son Leonard, as the last couple of postmasters. The first I remember when I came were the W. Vaudreuils, though I think Mrs. Vaudreuil was listed as the postmaster. And this is strange, too, because the records show that back in 1896, a year after a meteorological station was set up here, Mrs. Vaudreuil was the "first" observer after the original, W. G. Knight. However I can remember Bill Vaudreuil well. He was such a cultured gentleman, with a fine moustache and in winter wore one of those high peaked Persian lamb hats and a big coonskin coat. He had a delightful French accent, quite a bon vivant. I'm sure they handled the P.O. in 1900 and first in a building on Railway street.

Then there was a Mr. McDougall I remember next as handing out the mail.

Then there were Mr. and Mrs. John White, and I remember them in the P.O. at the corner of Railway and First west. Quite English, both had white hair, were pink complexioned, efficient and nice.

Then there was Frank Brown who was followed by the Corrigans.

Mention of Mrs. Vaudreuil and the weather station, newcomers might be interested to know that there has been a weather observation station in Swift Current since 1895, same set up by the Dominion government. The first official observer was W. G. Knight, who had filed on the first homestead in the area, and whose son, Walter whom I knew well, was the first white boy born around here. The Vaudreuils then kept the records and in 1913 old Capt. McKay took over at his place in Riverside Park. His observer was a bonny Scot, Alex Shaw, who later worked for W. W. Cooper for years, ended up in the Dusty Thirties with The Sun. We sent him out in the country bringing in chickens and meat for subscriptions (few had any money) from the farmers. Many a time in those days, the press room at the back of The Sun was quite

gory with quarters of beef being cut up, and together with chickens ladled out to the staff. No kidding, for quite a time the bosses, Hutchinson, Moore and Greenblat traded groceries for advertising with Coopers. Those were the tough days, but we came out of it.

For a while weather statistics were kept at the Radio Range Station not far from Elmwood Golf Club, then moved to the Experimental Farm.

As water is the first limiting factor in crop production in this dry area, for this reason the availability of precipitation statistics was very important to the scientists who dealt with the problem after the experimental farm was set up. So, Dr. Lowell Doughty had statistics and information going back to 1895. It is interesting to note that our wettest year was in 1891 with 24.35 inches of rainfall; the lowest in 1937 (who will ever forget that year and those surrounding it) when we had only a little over 8 inches.

It is interesting to note a squib in 1912 issue of the Swift Current Daily Express (no kidding, after all we were entitled to a daily paper besides weeklies. Wasn't Swift Current shown as the fifth in Canadian cities for building, and had a population of 2,850). Also an item about a letter to the Editor asking for a school for the south side and a subway under the CPR tracks to that growing community.

Talking of subways to the south side, back in the "thirties" we had a gentleman named Bill Weaver who lived on the south side, and actually got himself a railway crossing through his own efforts. Bill was a kindly soul with a walrus mustache, who was a Cockney orator of the old school. He loved people did Bill, and he also loved to gather folks around him any place on Central avenue at the drop of a hat. He'd spout on any given subject, mainly civics. He had one pet peeve and that was he wanted an overhead crossing to the south side. He ran for council several times, and lo and behold one time he made it.

He raised such a fuss that finally the city and CPR got together and built a very high monstrosity of a steel pedestrian bridge across the tracks at Railway and Sixth East. But it proved a white elephant. Women couldn't pull babies or baby carriages up these steep steps and anybody with a subjective cardiac condition wouldn't dare to traverse it. It was fine for anyone training for wrestling or football, but that's all.

Bill was a lovable character. He liked to go to funerals, and was a familiar figure at George Warren's funeral home day in and day out. He always kept me busy scanning Letters to the Editor. But Bill got his bridge . . . even if it wasn't used. For over 20 years Bill was caretaker and lifeguard and friend of all the kids at the old Elmwood Park swimming hole.

World Series on Radio

Before we start this week's session, guess we'll have to confuse one issue a little more. The local official records seem to be that Swift Current was created a town in 1907 and that the first mayor was Wilfred Jones. Actually Swift Current became an official entity in 1904 which makes it 65 years old in 1969. Strangely the first two top bananas were named Jones. I have a clipping from an old column of mine which shows that into my office one day walked C. Rankin who was then provincial municipal administrator advisor, from

Regina. He said that Swift Current was created a village on February 4, 1904 when it was included in the Territory of Assiniboia. Overseer was Fred Jones, who held the office for one year. John G. Maxwell was appointed clerk for 1906 and 1907. I remember him well, when I was a youngster. But, Mr. Rankin stated that when the village was created a town on March 15, 1907—two years after the province of Saskatchewan came into being, the first mayor was A. W. Snider and G. W. Bilbrough first town clerk. My records seem to be that Mr. Snider had four years of mayoralty ending in 1912. So who was the first 1907 mayor, Snider or Wilfred Jones? So now I also discover that the first barber shop in Swift Current was run by a Mr. Jones. Very interesting. Which one? Apparently Wilfred Jones had been a rider with the early Cruickshank Ranch.

Not long ago I went into a barbershop I hadn't frequented before in the Kerrisdale district of Vancouver. The elderly inquisitive former prairie barber got chatting, and said: "Why I had a former Swift Current man in here the other day, a Mr. Yule and he's around 93 and still going strong." That was W. S. Yule, earlier days undertaker in Swift Current. I recall somewhere around 1956 he made a visit to S.C., and then he was around 80 years of age. He recalled when he was Mayor of our city in 1921, those dark days, when he headed a delegation to Eastern Canada to meet with the Committee of Bondholders, who were more than a little concerned about a little debenture debt of over a million bucks the city was defaulting on.

Did you know? That a 1937 bylaw sets the name of Mount Pleasant Cemetery for the old part of the north hill burial place, and Mount Pleasant Burial Park for the new cemetery. Or that in 1911 there were 220 telephones listed in Swift Current, some 4,498 in 1958. Wonder how many today?

Mention of the earlier days should include a familiar figure around town, one W. H. (Bill) Kirkaldie, who built the Kirkaldie Garage and if I recollect rightly, built the Lyric theatre building for the Allan Theatrical Company who occupied it first. Jack Lundholm, one of our very fine citizens through the years and who came here as an electrician first, became the owner later and operated the theatre for many years. Bill Kirkaldie was the most self-effacing guy you ever met, never spoke out of turn, but a very solid citizen. He had been a rancher in the region in the very early days.

Among other familiar figures around here in the boom days centering round 1911-12, were two brothers, Jack and Ben Wood, who had come out from Ontario and went into the men's clothing business, successively in the former Charles Reid and Christie Grant store, and then in the now Health Region building. Particularly they catered to the young men and naturally were great supporters of baseball and hockey. Both Jack and Ben were extreme extroverts. They got one of the first radios in town and we used to gather to listen with open mouths to Station CKCK, Regina. Their store was a great gathering place for the sports minded, and either of the brothers, nice guys, could out-talk anybody else.

And talking of early radio, one just can't forget Nick Carter's electrical business, the forerunner of Melhoffs on Central. Nick came to Swift Current from Fort William in electrical work, along with some of our "import" athletes, and went into business for himself.

Nick was a short, stocky, bull-dog pipe-smoking, very genial fellow who loved sports. The first World Series baseball on radio was heard in his place and every year he used to fill the shop up with chairs from the undertaking parlor. The week of the series was a ball, and I do mean ball. The first series

broadcast was a succession of telegrams read over the air giving the progress of the game. All the town sports were there. Nick used to have a big barrel of peanuts on the floor and help yourself. At the end of the game you had to dig yourself out. But it was fun, at a time when everyone knew everyone else in town.

I remember one series at Nick's after the first war and radio was new, when our genial dentist friend, Doc Jim Whyte, bet Mark Dantzker, (later a Winnipeg alderman) who ran a bucket shop across the road, \$100 on the Yankees against the Philadelphia Athletics. The A's were way ahead when Mark went out for a sandwich, chortling in glee. While he was out, the Yankees scored ten runs in the ninth, and Mark's money went kerflooeey. Among the hot sports always at these gatherings were such local luminaries as Doc Miller, Doc Oscar Irwin, Doc Stirrett, Ivory Daum, Harvey Cashore, Red Cloarec, Doc Whyte, Ernie Mugliston who was the official scorekeeper, Lawyer Abie Elliott, druggist Al Longmore, CPR Man Sam Dawson, Fred Herman, oodles of others. Those were the days.

Dorthea Recalls Things

Since starting this series I have had quite a few letters from folks also "remembering", but a recent one I had was most interesting. From an old friend in Dawson Creek, B.C., a real old timer of Swift Current. She was a Horton, now Dorthea Horton Calverley, and will be remembered by many. Her recollections include some I hadn't even heard of. So here goes.

As a teacher herself, Dorthea recalls in the early school days a Miss Shaughnessy of the snow-white hair, who, tho' she loved each and every one, disciplined in the old fashioned way by putting the culprit over her knee. I remember once being asked by her to stand up and answer some question. Unfortunately, I had some taffy candy in my mouth, my teeth stuck tight and wouldn't open. Poor Jim!

And she recalls, as I do, the progenitors of musical culture in this town of ours around 1910 to 1912. There was Prof. Henry, followed by Miss Ashley, who was to become Mrs. Joe Fownes, the redoubtable Miss Dade and then the sisters, Verda and Bessie Jones and others who gave the musically-oriented community a tradition still very much alive. Verda married the late Percy Town, who headed the power house operations and one of the finest singers ever to hit the prairies, and Bessie wed Bob Rowe.

Sure I remember Fenton's Grove, Dorthea. That was the place drowned out by the CPR dam being built. We used to skate all the way out there nights and build bonfires and roast marshmallows. Mr. Fenton was an early homesteader who brought in Manitoba maple seeds which naturalized in that coulee and made a wonderful picnic ground.

Sure I remember the first woman to ever land a plane in Swift Current. She was Miss Katherine Stinson, landed west of the old horse plant. First woman we ever saw in leather jacket and pants, too.

Who in the old town didn't know or hear of the Chinese gentleman who died in the old Reliance Hotel on Railway and wasn't discovered for some time and was rigor mortis. His body wouldn't go round the turn in the narrow

stairs, so Brunyee's draymen (the ambulance) decided to stand him up and let him slide down feet first. Something happened and he came out the front door head first at a terrific rate of speed. Those were the days.

She remembers as a youngster that Dr. A. E. Kelly had possibly the first car and she had a ride in it, very proudly, when they had to go to Hutcheson's drug store for a prescription.

She recalls when the Carleton on First west was built; it was the tallest building in town, and one Hallowe'en somehow they got a horse up to the top floor on the elevator but it wouldn't come down.

I wasn't around yet, but Dorthea was, when the menfolk of the little town "stole" a carload of coal from the railway company, back in 1906-07. There was a strike on in the mines, and a car was being sent in bond through Swift Current for analysis for scientific purposes in the East. It was a terrible winter and not a bit of coal in town.

The car was "accidentally spotted" on a side track by employees and the menfolk, including I. E. Argue, Bill Cooper's partner and brother-in-law, who was also a Methodist Sunday School superintendent and later M.P. for the constituency. They took bags and bagged enough coal for the townspeople. Don't call that stealing!

"Grandmother, mother and I were alone," wrote Dorthea, "and mother was holding my feet over the lamp to keep them from freezing. The lamp went out and just as we planned to go to the Imperial Hotel and ask shelter, Mr. Argue came along with coal. My grandfather and stepfather were away at a wreck between Medicine Hat and Swift Current."

Here's an interesting note, and don't mention marijuana. Dorthea tells us that near Dawson Creek on the John Hart Highway, she recently saw a large patch of the red double poppies for which the seed has been unobtainable for years, legally, that is. "I remember my grandmother's garden south of Waldeck between '05 and '09. When the Mennonites colonized they drove their effects past our place from the siding at Waldeck. Grandma saved seeds and gave many to the Mennonite women who admired the flowers so much. The Peace River poppie, she discovered, were from the Swift Current area. Their parents had moved from the Swift Current area, bringing the seeds with them to Yorkton in the 30's and then to the Peace. Grandmother brought her seeds from Wisconsin in 1905."

This writer recalls that in the Mennonite villages south of Swift Current the brilliant poppies could be seen for years in the gardens. The original strain had probably run out, but the form was unmistakable. Dorthea's grandmother started the full circle with seeds from Wisconsin when Swift Current was still in the Northwest Territories.

Fine City Employees

Not because Hallowe'en is just over, but because they were all characters of one sort or another (and that's not said in any derogatory sense but with pleasant recollections), let's mention a few of the oldtimers who trod the streets of Swift Current in their own maybe inconspicuous way. They helped to build the community, but unobtrusively.

For instance, there were Mr. and Mrs. Wesley Handford, kindly souls, good neighbors. They came here same month, same year, as I did. He worked in the Land Titles Office for some years, did Wes, until his passing in 1933. I mention them as an example of the history of the folks who made early Swift Current tick. It was through knowing Bill Yager down east that he moved his family west. Bill became a Sheriff of the judicial district. Wes was born in Exeter, Ont., and part of his father's farm became the Centralia Air Training Base in World War II. His mother's family were United Empire Loyalists from New York, many of whom settled at London, Ont. Mrs. Handford was born on Manitoulin Island on Lake Huron where a group of Irish immigrants settled in the 1850's, but after Confederation that part of Manitoulin was set aside for the Huron Tribe of Indians. Many of the Irish families moved to North Dakota, among them the McLeods who operated the mill on Railway here for a while, later farmed at Success and Pennant.

From this family came Kathleen, Mrs. A. F. (Ivory) Daum, who married one of the best known ballplayers of that era, an American from Portsmouth, Ohio, who also served in Swift Current's 209th battalion in the First War; and Iola, now Mrs. Len Morrey of Burnaby, B.C. Ivory Daum was a yardmaster of the CPR here for years. So the lives of early pioneers are entwined with history.

And who of the old timers can't recollect with affection such long time employees of the town and city like, for instance, Jim Hutcheson, who back around the First War days was listed as a teamster in the city works department and in later years as foreman, superintended much of the local works activity. Mrs. Marjorie Couch, now of Edmonton, was a daughter and taught school. In the late 50's, kindly Jim, a pillar of his Presbyterian church, was struck down by a car and killed at the Central intersection right by his church.

Then there were staunch employees like the ebullient, peppery Scotsman, Pete Smith, who was foreman of city stores in 1916, later was fire chief for years. He really was a sight when controlling operations at a fire.

And mentioning old timers we could refer to something which was hush-hush those days, but taken for granted in this hippie-oriented age. Away south of Oman School was a "house of recreation" run for years by a Madame named Blanche who came from Paris, of all places. Everyone knew the place was there.

Blanche always had a bevy of beauteous ladies at her establishment, who came in, some of them, nearly every day to shop. Blanche, even in those Victorian days, was a respected shopper at the stores and as well known as the mayor of the day. She had a delightful French accent.

The legal fraternity of Swift Current have always played a large part in the development of the place, but I think one deserving of special mention insofar as education is concerned, was the late J. O. Begg. He was intensely interested in the schools and served on many of the boards through the years. A very kindly, friendly man was J. O. as he was affectionately known. Mrs. Begg was the spearhead of musical activities in Swift Current for many years, and had a superlative voice which she contributed to entertainment of all kinds. She was active in the Orpheus Club and other musical and cultural parts of the community life.

Another lawyer, George F. Roth was also a great community man and like J. O. Begg had a musical wife who helped develop the musical and cultural attainments of the city. George was in the law firm with Judge C. E. Bothwell

in the earlier days, and espoused strongly the Liberal part of politics locally. He played a great part in development of the Swift Current Agricultural Society as part of Frontier Days.

Talk about student activists these days; we had one in Swift Current for many of the earlier years. He was Gordon Green, a youngish redheaded Irishman turned farmer, who was always for the underdog and loved a fight, either on the political platform or with fists. In the dirty 30's, when the famous Unemployed March from Vancouver eastward towards Ottawa was in full flight, Gordon took part in the great battle with the police in Regina and came home with a battered noggin. Gordon could talk the leg off a turkey and never happier than when slamming the Establishment. But a nice guy, and his two sons, educated here, distinguished themselves in the Canadian Army.

Lots of Irishers Around

Last week we touched on the 209th Battalion. But that wasn't the first unit to be raised here in the First World War. The very first was the 9th CMR (Canadian Mounted Rifles) and this was a Swift Current company of a Saskatchewan unit. It was commanded by our dentist Lt. Col. George L. Cameron, who had been active in the local militia regiment.

The one thing that was different in 1914 as compared to today, was that those days there was a real patriotic fervor after Kaiser Bill's army invaded Belgium. Folks were patriotic to the "nth" degree. So many people of the town and district had ties with the "Mother Country" as it was then known. Life was so simple and uncomplicated that patriotism and reverence for the "Crown" was one of THE virtues.

The Sons of England, the Caledonians, it didn't matter, everyone was caught up in patriotism. It was a common thing for parades to form on Central and march around town behind the Union Jack. It might be John Banks (later Customs Officer) or A. E. Sparshatt, the auctioneer, who would be carrying the flag proudly up rutty 11th avenue.

There was quite a rush for enlistment in 1914 as the CMR's took shape. Just out of high school and articled in the law office of Bothwell and Campbell, I thought I was patriotic too, and joined up. After a while I was taken out as under age, but subsequently made it in another unit.

We were barracked in the Imperial Hotel. The bare top floor was ours. I remember being roomed with an Australian whose name I forget, but he was probably the tallest guy in the Canadian forces, topping 6 ft. 9 ins. Yes, you guessed it, the third in the room was Tommy Wilkes, the bugler, probably the smallest guy in the army. He had been managing Revelstoke Sawmill Co. branch here. And we did have fun!

We used to drill way out in the west end opposite the Massey Harris new building. Left, right, left, right, even in 20 to 30 below at times, but for King and Country.

Our drill master was Bill Dawson, who had been in the British Territorials, I think. His son, Bill was years later, a linotype operator for us at The Sun. There were real, genuine, touching scenes the day the CMRs entrained for the wars. The whole town was out.

We always mention the Britishers here in the early days, but begorra there were a lot of Irishers around helping to make life merry. Off the top of my head I can recall quite a few including Barney O'Toole, a telegrapher; Bertha O'Brien who taught at Oman School; Pat O'Connor, the tailor; Paddy O'Neill, plumber and tinsmith for years, a lovable character, quite a curler; Pat Conway in his little store near the East crossing; and Jimmy O'Sullivan who ran the fashionable ladies' fashion shop in what was the Healy Booker Block. Mustn't forget my old friend, the late Hugh Corrigan, who went over as an officer with the 209th, was postmaster for years, the grey-haired toughest defenceman a local hockey team has ever had — and whose son, Leonard, is the well known postmaster now. Len survived the Jap prison terror camp at Hong Kong, and also played some tough hockey. Another son, made it as far as Toronto Maple Leafs for a while.

Pot Pourrie: A clipping from 1909 records that L. W. D. (Bud) Park of Cooper store staff was being complimented on his marriage. Well, later I recall, Bud left Coopers and started a hardware store of his own on Central, south of the Clinic, where I think there's a shoe store now, maybe Ronnie Smiths? He was in partnership for a while with Jerry Fyffe, a brother of Mrs. W. W. Smith. The Park Hardware golf trophy was played for many years on local links.

The same old page, The Sun noted that H. E. Bode had harvested 4,000 bushels of wheat and "was sitting pretty". The little country school southeast of Swift Current was named Bode School. And there was also mention that Police Chief Smeaton reported 63 drunks had been taken in from September to December. And that for the grand opening of the two-sheet curling rink on Christmas Day president Bob Edmanson would meet the I. E. Argue rink. Mr. Argue, a brother-in-law of W. W. Cooper, became Member of Parliament and was largely instrumental in getting the Dominion Experimental Station located here — eventually in 1921.

At the outset I mentioned John Banks, local customs officer. Just remembered an incident. John was quite near-sighted and wore thick glasses. He drove an old model car which was a good thing to keep away from. One day in the early twenties we heard a terrible crash (most business people gathered on Central those days just to talk). What happen? Well, John was parked on the west side just next to Melhoffs which was Nick Carter's then. John wanted to back out and instead gave her the gun full steam, and hurtled the sidewalk and right into the show windows of the store next to Melhoffs. Everything was smashed except near-sighted John Banks.

Typhoon Hits Town

A strange thing happened to me recently while I was in preparation of this series. I had just been looking at the "Golden Furrows", a historical booklet got out in 1954 by the Local Council of Women. The phone rang and a voice said, "Well, I see you're at it again."

He later identified himself as Jack Lentsch, whom I knew well of course. In the booklet was a picture of the famous 1911 Swift Current professional ball club, one of our greatest ever, and in that picture—58 years ago, was

Jack Lentsch, a young ardent ball player from St. Paul, Minnesota. And herein lies another of the interesting stories which are part of Swift Current's past.

I hadn't seen Jack for years but here he was phoning from Ladner, B.C., where he had seen the announcement of these articles in The Sun.

After his ball days, Jack took up farming near Tompkins, and through the years has been quite a constant resident of Swift Current, but now part-time retired at Ladner. Now over 80, Jack still has an 800 acre farm near Tompkins, regularly goes back to get the spring work done and again goes to the prairies for harvest work. What's eighty plus got to do with it?

Nobody, I mean nobody, can equal Jack Lentsch's contribution to the physical building up of Swift Current. From 1911 to recently he has been foreman for Gillstrom Construction. More and MacWilliam, MacWilliam and Burden, and on his own helped build practically every edifice including nearly every bank, old and new hospitals, Wigmores, Eagle theatre and Lyric, Empress Hotel, Coopers Store, old and new power plants, most of the schools and churches, Alexandra hotel, Kirkaldis, most of the industrial buildings in the west end, buildings on the east side of Central from Chaplin, bus depot, locker plant, Marylin Court, scores and scores of others. He was a No. 1 bricklayer. His sons, John Jr. and George graduated from S.C.C.I. here. John is now Director of Air Traffic at Vancouver's International Airport and George is principal of a big collegiate in Vancouver.

Jack came here in 1911 with the McNeely brothers from St. Paul, Minnesota, and being ball players stayed to play on the local team. The McNeely boys lingered on to become farmers up the north line.

Swift Current hasn't always been a dry town and I can prove it. I guess not many will recall the terrific typhoon deluge we had one Saturday morning, I think back in 1921 or maybe it was 1922. About 11 a.m. that morning we were advised from Maple Creek that mother nature was sending something in from the west that was really wicked.

The typhoon, or cyclone, or whatever it was, struck about 12:30 o'clock, and hit the west-end with such force that it dislodged about 120 steel oil drums just east of the west CPR crossing and sent them floating down to Central avenue.

Basements of the Imperial hotel and other places were completely flooded. The water was so high that some person got hold of a rowboat, was seen blithely rowing up Cheadle and that was about 3 o'clock.

The staff at Campbell, Wilson and Strathdee, wholesale grocers on Railway street west couldn't get out for lunch until well after three, and then had to go northward with their pants rolled over their knees.

While from earlier days Swift Current has been identified with the military in one way or another, not all newcomers may know that Swift Current had an illustrious regiment of its own in World War One. For now, just a capsule may suffice to sketch it. The 209th was authorized in February, 1916, taking over about 100 men who had enlisted in a company formed for the 128th in Moose Jaw. It was practically at full strength when moved to Camp Hughes, Man., in June and in October to Digby, Nova Scotia.

Three weeks later the unit embarked at Halifax on the Cunard Liner "Caronia", sailing for England with three other troop laden transports and destroyer escort. They landed in Liverpool, Nov. 11, with 968 men, went to Schorncliff, Kent under Lt. Col. Oswald Smyth, local lawyer, judge and old

timer. Unfortunately they were split up and went to different units in France and many distinguished themselves in the war.

The 209th was one unit which had a substantial Canteen Fund accumulated which was in trustworthy hands (local civilian trustees) and came in very handy during the dirty thirties when times were tough and helped out many a hard pressed former 209th family. The residue was turned over to the war veterans association after the final reunion of the 209th held in Swift Current in 1966, exactly fifty years after the battalion left Swift Current.

Hope some day to delve deeper into some stories of some of the wonderful characters (and I say that reverently) who went with this unit from Swift Current and district.

Scandal Rocks Community

Swift Current as a peripatetic frontier town and city has had its share of financial burdens and troubles through the years. The story of the enormous debt which built up prior to bankruptcy and the subsequent recovery by virtue of an efficient Board of Supervisors for years and a succession of sound mayors like John Friesen (now judge), Laycock, John McIntosh Irwin, Hayes, Keene, Rutherford, and Bob Dahl is pretty well known.

By the way, this Bob Dahl story is quite a success story, too. Bob's parents came here, if I'm right, back in 1912. Bob after schooling and the war worked as a clerk in the city hall, and got the big break when the Swift Current Bottling Works was taken over by him from W. W. Cooper who had acquired it. Bob slowly but surely modernized the plant and put Coke on the map in the area for good. It would be no secret that he prospered well and in this at the same time gave much of himself to the welfare of the city. A real fine citizen.

But not too many know much of the Big Scandal which rocked the community when city defalcations were divulged after there was a change of auditors in 1923. Prior auditors had been a Regina firm. A local man, Maurice Hesford, C.A., (the first to set out his shingle as C.A. in the city) was appointed. The defalcations in which the city clerk and others were implicated took place several years prior to Mr. Hesford's taking over. Five years before that, it will be recalled, Alderman Westlake (the photographer I wrote about earlier) moved for a change of auditors in 1928. No change was made and this was a costly interlude for the city.

However, the incoming council changed the situation and in the fall of that year the new auditor reported to council that the funds of the General Hospital (administered by the city) were at least \$16,000 to \$18,000 short. The city clerk of the day pleaded guilty to a charge of misappropriation.

Later Mr. Hesford received orders to re-examine the accounts of the city for five years prior to 1933, and this revealed further shortages of approximately \$35,000. No action was instituted in connection with the further loss but it was fairly well established there was inexcusable laxity through the years. It was a lesson that auditors were important, especially local ones.

Mr. Hesford now living in Victoria, and who calls occasionally for a chat when in Vancouver, was another young Englishman who became a fine citizen. He arrived in Swift Current in April 1913, was met at the depot by

a young lady, Miss Kathleen Gamman who had worked with him in a London office. She took him up the board sidewalk to Smyth and Begg's law office, where he started work as "collections" man. Maurice went overseas with the 209th, was accountant for a local wholesale grocery firm, then earned his admission to the Saskatchewan Institute of Chartered Accountants.

He made the grade in 1924 and pored over local business firms books for 28 years, when he moved to the coast. He saw quite a few of his students become C.A.s, among them Wik and Geoffrey, who also became outstanding community men.

The next earliest of local C.A.s I remember was our old friend, likeable Tom Ryder, who came here in 1916. One of Tom's daughters, Betty, became the chatelaine of the experimental superintendent's home as she married Grant Denike, a gracious hostess to the many V.I.P.s who used to call. Tom was very near-sighted which recalls one time I drove with him to Cadillac, and he dropped a cigarette into the seat and when fire broke out we had to pull into one of the Mennonite villages on No. 4 south for emergency help. Laughs galore in the old days.

One of the earliest town clerks I knew was an ebullient Irishman, George Arnott, who loved to sing and really had a good voice. I think George helped organize the first Little Theatre here. Later we had a Mr. Webb, David Seath, F. J. Ashford, George McLeod, as city clerks. Fred Ashford was also musical like George Arnott and played the piano. Mrs. Ashford was a vocalist often heard at local entertainment.

How about a few 1909 tidbits around the old home town: Bill Sanders had a fire at his butcher shop on Railway St. and had to move to the Imperial Hotel block. But this is the interesting part of the move; he advertised as a removal sale, choice front quarters of beef for 6-cents a pound . . . and would you believe it, that fall the Stanley Cup participants were the Montreal Wanderers and Edmonton . . . amateur, of course, as Lord Stanley first intended it to be . . . And an item that Mrs. J. M. Clarke, son and daughter, returned from a visit to their old home at Chillicothe, Ohio. The Clarkes came out to home-stead at Yellow Lake, south of town . . . that same daughter, now Mrs. Faye Shogan. . . . D. A. Small arrived to be manager of the Bank of Ottawa . . . Mr. Small I knew as another of the early birds who loved to harmonize around the piano or at local entertainment. As I remember it, folks didn't need a shot or two of fire water to make the welkin ring. Just the culture everyone seemed to enjoy, music.

Pro Sports Our Thing

This column is for the local sports minded, and relates again with more details to the 1911-12-13 era when Swift Current was as "big league" as Canadian teams could be in hockey and baseball. These were rough, tough professionals who participated. And the citizenry of that era wagered and spent real money on town "prestige".

This was the meat and potatoes of living those few years. I personally can remember one time when Medicine Hat was proud of its hockey team and dared Swift Current to bring its club down and a barrel of money besides. Well, Swift Current went in a long special train, nearly the whole dang town.

I think it was Old Joe Dempsey and Jake Kruse who collected wads of money around town and went ahead to lay the bets. Anyway the game at Medicine Hat was a resounding success. The whole trainload of Curentonians went on a celebration spree that night that made the Alberta gas town light up what wasn't lit. It's no rumour that the police cells in the Hat were far from adequate to hold those who had to sleep it off. That was an episode to remember.

Anyway I've now got some intimate dope on that sports era from my old friend Tanny Ross, now at 78, retired as electrical superintendent of the Detroit school system. At 18 he was far the youngest on that famous Swift Current 1911-12 hockey team which gave Moose Jaw Millers and Regina Caps "fits", as he said. The team's 122-minute overtime game against the famous "Hickory" Abbott and Regina Caps stood as a record for many years. Bill Bowers, brother of Bruce and George, was the face-off man and play-maker on that 7-man hockey club.

That 1911-12 team, according to Tanny, was not an import team as generally regarded by many, including myself. Here's why, he points out. Bill Bowers, Neville homesteader and local boy; Harry Elliott from the local Bank of Ottawa; Rosy Helmer, coach and spare goalie; Bill Cramp, "our policeman and a roughie"; W. H. Ford, father of Bill Ford, "our bank roll and greatest sports fan"; Bill Ross, Tanny's brother, working on the new power plant in town; Charlie Hurrler, the trainer, was later the first Swift Current man captured by the enemy in World War I; Harold Ailsby (father of Lloyd), homesteader at Vesper; "Bas" Newton, one-armed homesteader at Kincaid, the best goalie in Canada; Vic Jopp, was working for the new telephone company, a brother of lawyer Bill Jopp; Walt Bellamy, ex-Montreal NHL star, homesteader at Sask. Landing; Jack Westlake from Port Arthur; homesteaded near Aneroid, later hotel man at Shaunavon and Swift Current; "Doc" Hughes, brother of Mrs. Peter Rooney, "our greatest fan and repairman". There you have it.

Then, Tanny mentions (and we did refer to it earlier), the sports folks brought in several imports of high quality for both hockey and baseball in the following year. Swift Current had the "best ball teams" (and we agree with him), which took great delight in beating the league teams from Regina, Moose Jaw, Saskatoon and also barnstorming all over Western Canada — and always plenty of dough to bet on the S.C. team.

They brought in one big league battery, Jack and Tom Costello. Jack Costello, who later for years farmed at Aneroid, was the greatest pitcher ever to work on a local diamond. Both "worked" for Jack Burger, the lumberyard impresario, who spent thousands and thousands of his dollars on the Swift Current ball team.

Tanny recalls that 1912-13 was the year of imports, but "some of them spent too much time in the Alexandra bar". He recalls that year playing against Regina, Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat in the "amateur" league. They made the mistake of winning too many early season games by lobsided scores and finally were suspended as a "pro" team. Of these pros, the next year George Rochon of Winnipeg went to New Westminster, the then N.H.L. calibre Pacific Coast league; Bobby Genge from Gananoque, Quebec, went to Victoria in the PCL; Joel Rochon went to Quebec in the then NHL; Bas Newton and Tanny Ross went to play at Minneapolis, Jim Green and Daddy

Weeks to Trail, B.C. Incidentally, Tanny Ross writes that he thinks he's the only surviving member of that famous team.

Tanny waxes nostalgic about Swift Current, and after a half century away from here writes: "Those were the best years of my life. Swift Current has always been first in my memories." He recollects that as the first war clouds began to hover, there were other baseballers appearing on the local scene, mentioning such names as "Ivory" Daum, Archie Walkinshaw, Freddy Herman, Neil West, Vern Ross, George Hysop, a local lawyer, Bruce Bowers, the writer—modestly. Them were the days.

I can also remember that there were a lot of Old Country folk around and naturally they played soccer. And the hockey and ball fellows thought soccer was a hell of a sissy game. Sometimes they clashed, with fists or rocks, and made up afterwards in a bar over a beer. Quite a few of the many bank clerks here in that era were from the Old Country. And many naturally went to war at the crack of the first gun. One of these was our old friend Bill Bebbington, who won the Military Cross, came back to have a long career with Mutual Life preceding Fred Herman. And the late Frank Dickson also came here as a bank lad if I recall correctly.

Who Ran Organizations?

In August, 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, who had been itching for a fight, got what he wanted and would ever regret it. And the world would never be the same again. A tiny spot on the prairies in Western Canada, strangely named Swift Current because the Creek which cuts through it was a sort of sedentary stream, not Swift, was incorporated as a village in 1907. Its first mayor was a man named Wilfred Jones, A little less than eight years later Swift Current became officially a city, and its first mayor was a transplanted American, Frank E. West. And Swift Current would never be the same again. That year the president of its Board of Trade was Wilfred Jones, who had been mayor when it was a village.

Thus, this becomes another period in the history of Swift Current, when it emerged a full fledged adult — and was never the same again. As Swift Current became of age as the first World War in history blossomed, it is of that time and of those people I want to write what may be a few future columns. It was an interesting period.

On the scene were coming new faces, new characters, and the changing physical face of Swift Current some of which has never yet been erased, even with new freeways and buildings. My brainy computer stored away a number of interesting things of this period, which I will relate even in hodge-podge form.

As I left it, with others, for overseas service and returned, Swift Current had become a brash place. And even tho' the city name had not yet been attached to a provincial political constituency although places like Morse and Gull Lake had.

Leafing through I find the Board of Trade telling the world, "That Swift Current occupies a strategic location is evidenced by the actions of the great railway companies whose lines will soon be radiating therefrom in 12

to 15 directions . . . the CNR have their line on the southeast to within a few miles of Swift Current." (The line did end outside of Neidpath, stayed there nearly a century and died in the weeds) . . . The Great Northern has surveyed a line through Swift Current extending northwest, which will make it a divisional point on all four transcontinental railways, giving it the most enviable railway facilities of any city in Western Canada . . . Its importance as a wheat growing area is evidenced by the enormous grain shipments from Swift Current. Government statistics prove that Swift Current is the largest initial wheat shipping point in the world." What optimism!

A Board of Trade brochure boasted that they had an excellent public school . . . "and also a high school erected at a cost of \$50,000 . . . a second public school has just been completed and opened on the southside at a cost of over \$10,000." (Today those sums would hardly build a lounge room for the teachers).

As World War One pushed its bloody way into another full year, Druggist Theo W. Hutcheson succeeded Frank West as mayor. Councillors included former station agent Tom Dohan, who later built and leased the first Woolworth store here for that company; Nick Carter who had come in from Ontario with the immigration of baseball and hockey players and started an electrical shop later Melhoff's. Many of the city "brass," oddly enough, were outstanding vocalists and appeared regularly on local programs, the progenitors of our nowadays TV stars—like George Arnott, city clerk, an Irish tenor; George Munshaw, the assessor, George Southon, the sanitary inspector, and Percy Towns the power house superintendent. The poundkeeper that was John McIntosh, M.P. Jack's dad. But I guess no one will ever remember that Minnie Leek was high school supervisor for art and music. Fame is fleeting!

The principal of the High School was Duncan Brown, M.A.; at Central school, C. A. Drimmie, B.A.; at Oman School, J. G. Countryman, B.A.; at Elmwood, Robert Thompson.

The Board of Trade in 1916 was headed by Wilfred Jones, and the vice-president was Ed McKenzie, a name long in the history of this community; the secretary, John Banks, a thick-spectacled greying Englishman who became Customs Officer.

The Agricultural Society of the day was headed by Sun Editor Sam Moore, the Overseas Club by Rev. John Swalwell, Anglican; the Canadian Club by Rev. Dr. J. L. Nichol, Knox Presbyterian, Monty Moncrieff, merchant did the duties for the Curling Club; G. A. Gourley of the Bank of Ottawa looked after the shekels for the Tennis Club; Wilburton Gould was Bandmaster. Besides there was the Caledonian Society and the Knox Presbyterian Church Men's Club. And as for lodges, we had the Masons, Elks, Foresters, Odd-fellows, Rebekahs, Knight of Pythias, Eagles, Moose, Loyal Orange. That just about kept everybody busy in their spare hours around town.

Percy Mugliston was Dominion Lands Agent, and John White was Postmaster; Staff Sergeant Hedley Balsdon headed the Mountie detachment; J. T. Dodds, early school teacher, was clerk of the Court, P. F. Harding was Registrar of Land Titles, Bill Milburn, Sheriff. Bill Jopp left his local law practice to be deputy registrar of Land Titles.

Ruckus at the Hospital

We discussed some of the physical assets of the burgeoning community, and have to add that the fire department of that day, headed by Chief E. M. Ross, had 12 paid volunteer firemen. The equipment included one chemical engine, a ladder truck, two hose reels, two hose carts, two hose wagons, 120 hydrants, with an average pressure of 65 pounds. Four trustees ran the public and high school establishment, being chairman James S. Green, Bill Marlow, who had a lumber yard, John Grinder and Sam Helleckson, the latter a hardware store owner about where Halls Sporting Store now is on Central.

The new Swift Current, now a city (in name anyway), had a good religious foundation. St. Stephens Anglican Church had as rector, Rev. John Swalwell, a lovable English type; Rev. Horace C. Speller was pastor of the Baptist Church on First West; Rev. M. M. Bennett looked after Metropolitan Methodist; Presbyterian Knox had Rev. Dr. John Lenox Nicol, who went to bigger fields and became a well known Canadian figure. Sacred Heart Church was administered by Rev. Eugene Cabanel. Rev. Rasmus O. Stove was pastor of United Norwegian Lutheran Church at Cheadle and Third, and the Salvation Army head was Adjutant Margaret Andrew. A Holiness Movement Mission was on 5th East, but the pastor's name is lost to me.

Swift Current those days was rightly proud of its new hospital, and the matron was Miss Delia E. Gillespie. It was in the early 1920's that Miss Gillespie became embroiled in a bitter community hassle that had everybody choosing sides. It was in connection with Miss Gillespie's disciplinary action against some nurses. As I remember it, Sam Moore, Sun Editor, was also chairman of the hospital board and he took the nurses' side. Editor Bennett of the Herald naturally came out for Miss Gillespie, and the editorial war blazed fiercely. The citizens took sides and what a war it was!

In the midst of the controversy Editor Bennett left for the East and I was hijacked into the editorial reins. Forgetting I was a rank amateur compared to Moore and Bennett, I stepped in "where angels fear to tread". Anyway, eventually, the community went back to normal and folks spoke to each other on the street again. Those were the days.

What did Central Avenue look like the year after Swift Current became a pseudo city? Well, let's just travel northward on the east side of Central avenue for a block or so, starting at the corner of Railway and Central. At the corner J. G. Laycock had his drug store. An estimable gentleman, he was a power in civic politics for some years, was mayor too. Then came Bessie MacDougall's millinery; Jim Livas had a cleaning place; then G. H. Pender's barber shop; the Crown Jewellery store; George Tite a Cockney shoemaker; Cooper's department store; Eagle theatre and upstairs, R. A. Ross, dentist; Eagle Lodge hall; Bank of Ottawa; Mitchell and Powley, real estate and insurance in the basement. Then came the Bilbrough block which had McKenzie and Manns clothing store; barristers Begg and Hayes, Hutcheson and Hysop; Dempsey's pool room; Alexandra hotel; Ernie Delaney, shoe store; Savoy Cafe; Princess Candy Kitchen and Canada Cafe on the corner.

You'd find quite a change from now on the west side of Central in the first block, starting with the good old Imperial hotel. In the building Bennie Levine with his East Side New York accent had a clothing store and here was a character everyone liked to talk to. M. J. Spencer had a tailor shop; Smith

and Wallace, realtors; W. S. Yule had his first undertaking parlors, very inadequate when the big flu epidemic hit in 1918. Then came the Northern Crown Bank in the Reid Block in which was the Swift Current Trading Co. run by Hymie Wodlinger; the Union Bank with employees living upstairs; also Doc McArthur, that roly poly raconteur, who built that fine home now occupied, I think, by Dr. Strothers Stewart on Dufferin. Then came the Royal Bank; Waller the Jeweler and Chris Jensen, the Danish meat dispenser; The Burrows Building which had Wigmore's Fair and Rooney's Pharmacy was this side of the Canadian Bank of Commerce; Charlie Mair, confectioner; Law and McKay, grocers and the Quebec Bank on the corner. Quite a difference nowadays.

I want to tell you that the south west corner at Cheadle was the Hyde Park of Swift Current. Always a crowd of citizens loafing around and discussing politics, leaning against the bank for shade on a hot day. One more interesting note this week. At this time, as a trailer to the boom and building days, there were seven lumber yards in Swift Current: Beaver Lumber, Canadian Lumber Yards, Kimball Lumber Co., Lumber Manufacturer Yard, W and R Marlow, Pioneer Lumber, Revelstoke Sawmill Ltd. And there were seven livery, feed and sales stables: Gil Brandhagen, City Cartage, City Livery, Kelly Bros., John McIntosh, Pioneer Stables, Lou Schrader. Who needed garages?

Narcotics Here—Never?

With the consent of Sun Editor John Friesen, I am taking the liberty this week of digressing for once from the subject of "old timers". I would like to deal briefly in this article with "young timers" of Swift Current, and this includes all youngsters and teenagers attending public and secondary schools. I hope I will be excused if I get a little sentimental and serious about a serious matter. This is motivated by my concern after living 51 years in Swift Current from youngster to adolescence to maturity.

When I received my copy of The Sun just recently I was heartsick to read that the RCMP had reported the illegal use of narcotics is definitely on the increase in Swift Current; that so far in 1969 38 persons have been admitted to hospital for treatment following use of drugs. What shocked me was, "Most of the arrests by the police have involved students at the Comprehensive School. Marijuana, LSD and hashish have been involved."

I just couldn't believe it, but there it was in cold print. There is little consolation in the fact that the police statement said it was no worse in Swift Current than in Weyburn, Yorkton or North Battleford.

I left Swift Current in 1960 after 51 years, and during that time had never heard of, nor suspected anything of this sort. In my five years at Vancouver I should of course, have been insulated against any shock about narcotics, for this is a big city, a seaport with a drug history and a very sad one. Within the past five weeks, one 16-year-old student from what is described as a "good family", jumped to his death from the window of an apartment on the 22nd floor, bemuddled by the effects of LSD; a week later another 16-year-old boy, a high grade student was found dead with a self-inflicted bullet wound. In the apartment were hundreds of tablets (narcotics) and the equipment used by

traffickers to prepare dope for sale. He too, was from a fine family, now heartbroken and forever soul-seared by something they had never suspected.

What is it today that cause young kids to indulge in the use of, and trafficking, in drugs? The Narcotics Foundation in Vancouver has publicly estimated that in some schools here, 40 per cent of the young people have been, or are, experimenting with drugs of various dangerous degree. It's a pitiful situation, fraught with so much danger for the generation coming up who will have to be the leaders of all facets of our society.

When I look back through half a century of watching thousands of young Canadians progress through the schools of Swift Current, with such a minimum of delinquency of any sort, and of the wonderful contribution most of them have made to Canadian society, it is unbelievable to me that this drug business is happening. Fortunately, I'm sure, those being influenced by drugs must be a small minority — but the situation becomes fraught with danger. Drugs means dropouts, for one thing.

I don't want to pontificate to the kids about the danger of drugs, that should be up to parents. But drugs mean dropouts, and that means loosening of the morals of our society and the eventual disintegration of law and order without which society cannot endure, democracy or otherwise. Some very succinct thoughts on these matters were expressed in a recent editorial in the Vancouver Province, titled "Where are the real dropouts?". For what it's worth, this is it, and I quote:

"Premier Bennett offered some thoughts the other day that should make us look again at the so-called dropouts and should make those who think they are dropouts take a hard look at themselves.

"If today's protesters won't accept our society at all, they should go to the great northern half of the province. They can pioneer there, without roads, telephones or electricity, and see what they can build".

And they will have an easier time than the local pioneers had 90 years ago.

This is an offer that should be seriously considered by those who claim they want to opt-out. There is no need to frustrate themselves in the settled communities where they abhor the conventions and the drabness of every day routines. They can hightail it out into the wilderness and do their 'thing' without anyone molesting them.

Come to think of it, the New World was founded by dropouts. Columbus probably didn't think of himself in such terms but he was one of the early rebels against conventional thinking.

The Pilgrim Fathers who came over on the Mayflower were among the unconventional thinkers of their time who crossed the ocean to seek spiritual and religious freedom. That they started the richest industrial state is a commentary on what can stem from original thinking.

Modern society was built by men who thought differently than their fellows did and molded the worlds to their ideas — Newton, Edison, Watt, Einstein. But the dropout of 1969 doesn't seem to be a real dropout. He seems to have but one idea — that he doesn't like what he sees. Seldom does he crusade in explicit terms for the better kind of world he evidently seeks. Seldom does he do any pioneering away from the established communities. Invention is a stranger to him — except in the area of strange clothes and habits.

True, the dropouts sometimes stray away from the Big City — when the weather and season are favorable. But they stay close to sources of food,

shelter, liquor, tobacco and the other amenities that they have not completely renounced.

Indeed, this kind of dropout seems to be putting us on, as well as deluding himself. He isn't a real dropout at all. His reluctance to involve himself in improving society or to soil himself by seeking gainful employment must make many wonder whether he isn't the natural successor to what an earlier generation simply called a "bum".

If the kids of Swift Current could spend a day watching the strange, bewildered, dirty, dishevelled young girls and boys who frequent the hippie areas and other haunts and streets in Vancouver—and the end results of Skid Road, well, let's leave it at that.

Lundholm, Great Citizen

The history of places is people, and I think, wherever possible, people who have inordinately contributed to communities such as Swift Current, should be recognized. No one deserves that more than everybody's friend, the late Jack Lundholm, the local theatre magnate, whose life was indelibly wrapped up in this community for some 56 years.

"The Swede" as we affectionately called him, whether golfing or playing penny ante with him over many years, really enjoyed that appellation. For half a century his slow-gaited figure ambling down Central from the Lyric to the Venice or Elite cafe to join the gang for coffee, was a familiar sight.

Jack's life provided entertainment for the folks, from the silents to the talkies. Thousands of men and women, scattered all over the continent will recall, as kids, his Lyric and later Eagle Christmas parties and there were well over 40 of them all told. He was one of the humblest and kindest persons I knew in my home town. He was unostentatious with his generosity. Very few were privileged to know of the many improvident young men and young ladies he has helped complete a college or university education; or through the years of the many needy families he has helped; of his genuine and sincere concern for crippled children and his work in that through the Shriners. In all this, his wife Violet, shared.

Jack was a Swede who, following his emigration to Boston, Mass., came to Swift Current in 1913 as an electrician. But for a stint at homesteading somewhere near Shaunavon he has been here for over half a century, and most of it in the theatre business. The Lyric, as was the Eagle, was built in 1912 — and we might as well, while at it, give a brief history of entertainment in Swift Current.

The Lyric was built at a cost of \$50,000 by John Grinder, Jake Kruse and the McLenaghan brothers, all well known old-timers, of course. The Eagle was built by J. C. Bertin and leased to "Dad" Leach. The only other theatres to figure in local history were the Magic, the old stone barn on First east, and the Unique, where now the Sask. Power building is.

Jack Lundholm operated the projection machine at the Lyric and was promoted to manager in 1923 by the Allen theatre chain which acquired it in 1918 and managed by the ebullient Scot, "Scotty" Wallace.

Jack took over from Allan's in 1925, and joined in a partnership with Mike Healy of the Eagle in 1926. In 1928, Jack acquired the Lyric building entirely,

with its apartments, etc. After a partnership lasting 28 years, Jack bought out Mike. For many years, Jack's right hand man has been Vic Phaneuf who came from Regina, and a very popular man has been Vic, too.

In 1960 the Eagle was sold to Harold Hawthorne, who remodelled it for a drug store. He had previously been with Laycock's drug store, and bought out Mrs. Laycock in 1954.

Jack started his association with local kiddies in 1924, with a Christmas party for kids with a Jackie Coogan picture. Admission was a potato. Why potato? Well, 636 kids brought in seven bushels of potatoes for a poor, large family in town which Jack had been helping. His Christmas parties continued on through the years.

There's hardly been an important organization in Swift Current that The Swede didn't belong to. The Swede, who boasted he'd never had much education, was a very well self-educated man. He belonged to the Kiwanis Club and became president. He was a Mason and went to top honors there also. He became a member of the original Elks lodge, became the top banana. He played golf, so naturally Jack had to become president. The Agricultural Society and the Great Frontier Days celebration was a project he delved in and naturally before long was recruited to the top job. He was a member of the Western Canada Movie Exhibitor's Association and, what else, Jack Lundholm was elected to serve as president two terms. When the Shriners Wa Wa Club was organized in Swift Current, mainly interested in work for crippled children, Jack was its first vice-president. The first president locally was Charlie Ellis who once was the goalie for a famous Regina Allen Cup winner. And I'll never forget, Jack Lundholm was the promoter's name on the poster when he promoted the big all-star wrestling card after Citizens Rink was built in 1926, featuring the handsome Carl Van Wurden.

Yep, he was quite a man was The Swede. He gave so much of himself to his beloved Swift Current in over half a century he deserves a street being named after him.

I knew much about Jack, because when I started in the newspaper business as editor of The Herald, the building was right opposite the Lyric. We both communed back and forth. In over 50 years we never had any misunderstanding except one time the old Chautauqua came to Swift Current, and I wrote a piece about it. Jack was also a sensitive man, and thought home industry should have the preference. But he soon forgave and forgot and we remained great friends ever since. Guess he was right.

Jack and Vi's New Year afternoon soirees for friends became a wonderful institution. Wish all communities could stay smaller and more folksy as they used to be.

Sign Painter De Luxe

Let's digress this week again about characters who have had their humble impact on the first half century of the modern Swift Current; I mean people who weren't politicians or otherwise in the cornea of the public eye. Men, for example, like Jim Clements, whose name means little or nothing to the more recent inhabitants of the city.

Jim Clements was a tall, good looking, lean Irishman — and I use that term literally — who migrated from Ireland, I think, to New York and then

like the crow flies, to Swift Current. Jim was a painter by profession, and first worked for the gregarious Jake Kruse. For half a century Jim was The Sign Painter of Swift Current and one of the most artistic and capable. He was the guy who first repainted cars, who first touched up collisions on the old Model T Fords, and his signs decorated every business place in the town and city.

Jim Clements' place of business or workshop was a long ramshackle frame building across from the present Legion Hall on First East. I think that at least for 40 years I hardly ever went a day without dropping in at Jim's to discuss issues of the day and fascinatedly watch him rub a little brush through his hair so that a piece of gold leaf might adhere to it and be placed on an embryo sign, or watch him re-paint a car. I wasn't the only one fascinated by his work and talk. He was a philosopher as erudite as Socrates. There wasn't any place to sit in the workshop, so everyone who dropped in leaned against something that was dried paint in Joseph's colors.

But Jim wasn't only a sign painter and philosopher. He loved curling and above everything, golf. Jim also had a terrible temper, especially when he missed a putt. For more years than I can count he was captain of Elmwood Golf Club and his sacred right to make the draws was never questioned. If the clubs he smashed when angry on the links were placed end to end, I'm sure they'd reach around the world. But we all loved the volatile Irishman, and he was as much memorabilia of Swift Current as the cob is to corn. And Jim also did his civic duties, especially on the school boards which he graced through the years — even served as Chairman.

Swift Current was much the better for men of Jim Clements' breed. And golf must have been in his blood, for his son, Carson, was also long, lean but a much better golfer than his dad would have liked to have been.

Those were the days in Swift Current during the First War and the decade of the post-war period, when actually it was a Frontier City in the sense that it was still a throwback from the village days and a neighborly place to be in. The pace of living wasn't hectic. Amos 'N Andy, and Jello Jack Benny and Fred Allen were still to come. Canada's national flag, even tho' the Union Jack, was prominently displayed on July 1st. And instead of rushing around ever, every busy pursuing the elusive buck, one sauntered around town, having a chat at Jim Clements' place. Or dropping in at Austin Begg's tailor shop on Central and rolling the bones for a quarter. Or stopping at Joe Earley's shoe store and absorbing some Irish wit. Or if your tooth was aching you could walk into Doc Jim Whyte's dental establishment, get your fill of hockey and baseball talk and hear it from his own lips that the federal Liberals were an abomination to Canada's political future.

And it didn't mean anything in anyone's life to spend an hour or so at Jim Alexander's tinsmith across the street on Chaplin from the present post-office, or around the corner another ebullient plumber named Paddy O'Neill, one of the many Irishers of Swift Current. He could make a toilet plunger literally talk, and also was a real expert curler, talk it and play it.

Or if you felt like smelling saddle leather a guy could always drop in at Ernie Boardman's in the Imperial Hotel block on Central. Ernie was a soft-spoken Englishman who knew his trade. His window advertised, "Harness, Saddles, Leather, Saddlery, Hardware, Whips, Robes, Blankets, Tents, etc.; harness and saddlery repairing a specialty".

If you wanted a bank loan there was Bill Boynton-Coffey at the Union

Bank then still in existence. Mr. B-C was a handsome fellow who looked like the famous romantic movie star, Ronald Coleman (if you remember him), talked like him, too. Had an Oxford accent you could cut with a knife.

A favorite hangout was at the west-end of the Imperial Hotel where Malcolm Cameron had a billiard establishment. Malcolm was a large, striking looking man himself and reared three sons whose looks would put many a movie star to shame. Larry went with the 209th and lost his life overseas in the First War; Dunc, whom I went to school with, survived the war, but later drowned in a slough while hunting, near Rush Lake. He had the Dodge car business across from the Healy Hotel, now Ham Motors; the other son, Bert, also passed away in the prime of life.

Summerfallow and Crops

A change from "old characters" this week and we'll touch on a subject which changed the face of Swift Current district and its economic future. The subject is summerfallow. What brought it to my mind was in thinking of the characters (nice people) who trod the streets of Swift Current around 40 to 50 years ago. And one was Johnny Bell, a progeny of the famous Bell Farm people at Indian Head who had pioneered farming on a big scale in Western Canada. Johnny loved sports and hung around with the sporting folks of the community. And they had a big family farm south of Swift Current, too. Summerfallow, strip farming and many other methods culminating research at the Dominion Experimental Station here after its establishment in 1912, eventually cut down the hazards of "land blowing" and made farming on this dry land area more secure. But summerfallow was the first elixir. I resurrected a treatise on summerfallow among clippings, one of which ran in *The Sun* in the early 50's. (Our experimental station people were always co-operative with the press in this regard.) So a little run-down on the history of summerfallow in this part of the Western Prairie would not be amiss, as a matter of interest.

During the first years of settlement, out here, 1883 to 1889 inclusive, farmers suffered severely year after year from drought, frost and wet falls. Many left the country disillusioned, and it looked like those who claimed wheat couldn't be profitably grown on the prairies were right.

The discovery of summerfallow, which rejuvenated the industry, came about like many other things, by pure chance. You will recall General Middleton came from the east with his troops in 1885 to take the field against the rebels under Riel, eventually disembarking here for the cross country trek from Swift Current to Battleford. He required horses. The Bell Farm established at Indian Head at this time was a wheat producer. Most of the Bell horses were leased to General Middleton with the understanding that they would be returned to the farm in time to cultivate the land in the spring of '85. The horses were late in returning, obviously. As most of the farm couldn't be ploughed until June, too late to sow, so the land continued fallow for the whole of the '85 season without growing a crop.

In the spring of '86 the land which had been fallow, was sown. There was a bad crop year with drought and the stubble was almost a total failure, but a good yield was harvested on the land that had lain fallow all the summer.

Few realized at the time that the fallow land of a whole summer had accumulated the 1885 summer rains, thus became available for the 1886 crop. The discovery on the Bell farm attracted a great deal of attention and gave new hope to farmers for producing a crop in a dry year.

With the establishment in 1888 of Dominion Experimental Farms at Brandon and Indian Head was projected the new discovery. News of the new discovery spread and immigration which had faltered perked up again and what we have today is the result, one can say, of what happened at the Bell Farms of Indian Head in the year of the Rebellion. Summerfallow, though not the whole answer, has served well in making the western prairies among the best grain growing areas of the world.

It appears certain, the experts tell us, that other areas of the world, particularly Northern China, a semi-arid area similar to our prairies, and with a record of wheat farming for thousands of years, must long ago have discovered this simple method of preserving two years' moisture to assure one year's crop.

The Bible, too, that great source of sound agricultural advice, here and there mentions fallow land.

I guess that probably the Bells south of Swift Current may have been the first of our "big" farmers, but in this category one can also include John Washington who for many, many years had big farm holdings south of Swift Current. He was always considered a successful farmer. At the same time for some years the biggest furniture business in town was carried on by Arthur Washington, a brother of farmer John. With Arthur in the furniture business was another fine citizen, Art McCrie, who later branched out for himself in this business, and helped furnish many a Swift Current home. As we have mentioned in a previous column, the area between Swift Current northward to the river was one settled by many wonderful farm families also, some from the U.S. and many of them of Scandinavian origin.

No wonder the boosters always referred to this area as "The Breadbasket of the World." It has quite a record through the years.

Christmas in Those Days

As this is the last column of 1969, the Christmas flavor must predominate. We don't apologize for giving, for the benefit particularly of newer Currentonians, a virtual repeat of some items in a column I wrote in *The Sun* some 20 years ago. It concerned life in Swift Current 60 years ago from this week—and that was only 14 years away from Riel Rebellion time. But it shows Swift Current was stirring as an embryo heading for the metropolitan centre it is today. So here goes:

Before getting into the gossip of that week, let's remind the city fathers of 1909 that Swift Current's assessment in 1909 was (don't guffaw), the munificent total of \$150,000; it's probably closer to 8-10 million today. The mill rate was six mills and the estimates the astounding total of \$5,935. Teachers salaries totalled \$563. I don't know what they are for 1969 but a good guess might be closer to a million dollars. The incongruous part of the city business of that era is that four years later, in 1913 the assessment was,

believe it or not, \$14 million. They were seeking a city charter which they got within a year or so, but in making that assessment everything went on the line, sub-divisions and all. They had to have a population of 5,000 or over to make city status, so, as I remember it at that time, they enumerated every living cat, dog and horse to reach the goal—but they did make it.

In the Christmas week of 1909, the change-over in district economy from ranching to grain was noticeable. The Sun issue of that week included Webb News, and it showed that over 50 cars of wheat had been shipped from that point during the fall. In the Wheat Valley district, the correspondent reported, there was a debate on the subject whether women should have the vote . . . in the news also was the item that out of Buffalo Plains the bachelors got together and held a dinner for their district friends . . . a new town was appearing north of Swift Current across the river, named Rosetown and a copy of the Rosetown Eagle appeared in our office.

There were Keithville items in the Sun (a district northwest of here down Pennant way) of importance, W. S. Ullery had killed a beef and W. S. Stutsman and wife had dinner with R. L. Wright and family.

The Sun reported with gusto that the Grand Trunk Railway was "invading Swift Current and that Bill Burns, then manager of the Union Bank, had rheumatism bad and left for Banff sanitorium for it" . . . and that D. Somerville, manager of the vast Matador Ranch had come in for Christmas, a guest at the Alexandra.

Out southeast in the Belvedere district, the folks thought they should be linked with Swift Current by telephone.

Skips for the season at the two-sheet curling rink included W. W. Cooper, J. A. Yager, J. P. Rooney, J. K. Smith, Harry Lamm, Dr. Field, Beecher Mann, W. O. Smyth, H. C. Powley, Jim Shields, Pete Hessell.

Juvenile delinquency might have been rampant even as far back as 1909 . . . someone stole Mrs. Charlie Reid's purebred turkeys, and The Sun editor huffed that, "There sure are some low-down thieves in this district" . . . The Sun also noted that Rev. Thomas Bell had just closed a series of revival meetings in the Waldeck area.

Despite it being Christmas week, culture persisted in the town because the Literary Club met in Knox Church with Mayor Snider in the chair. A feature was a reading by Miss Benson on the Life and Works of Longfellow. (The Miss Benson could have been a sister of Mrs. Ruth Thompson, yet a resident here). Farmer H. E. Bode, east of the city, who had a country school east of here named for him, was going to Howell, Michigan for Christmas, hadn't been back since 1881.

What would a guy do with a load of wheat in those days before there were trucks for a quick getaway . . . George Falconer offered a \$100 reward for the varmint who stole a load of wheat from his place . . . Christmas music was being prepared at the Methodist Church and directing was T. W. Hutcheson, who owned the drug store corner Central and Cheadle. Business-wise, Anderson and Edmanson had 75 sets of heavy team harness for sale and the window at McKenzie and Manns store was full of Christmas gifts. Charlie Reid's store (Christie-Grants) offered gift handkerchiefs two for 25 cents and neckties for a quarter . . . W. Fred Godwin was advertising upholstery work at his log house on 15th Avenue and at Saskatchewan Landing A. G. Mackie had bought out P. S. Campbell's store. (How well we remember in later years Mr. Campbell, the articulate Scotsman).

The town sports enjoyed a wrestling match that week in which Carl Eklund beat A. Foss. There were some bets made. Chief of Police Tom Bell had prepared his report for council. A gloomy year it was liquor-wise, there were 63 drunks dealt with from Sept. 1 to Christmas week; the W.C.T.U. ladies were shocked. More culture announced that week: Maher and O'Connor, who owned the Magic Theatre on 1st east, behind the Co-op Store, had booked Shakespeare's "As You Like It" for January 3, with an English company.

In the school list for the primary room we note the name of Helen Schoonmaker. Her dad had the billiard parlor nigh the Alexandra with Joe Dempsey. Helen in later years married Dick Reidler, who was with the Union Bank, a brother of Blacksmith Gus Reidler, both with local ball clubs through the years. Dick Reidler later became president of a bank at Alhambra, California.

And so it went Christmas week, 1909, in Swift Current.

Warren a Tough One

Because the old Herald Building was near Yule's undertaking parlor (now the Saskatchewan Power Building) and right across from the Lyric, I think I'll always remember George Warren, Charlie Warren's dad. Charlie, of course, followed in his father's professional footsteps after a long stint as a collegiate teacher.

For the newcomers let's say that George Warren took over the business from Mr. Yule. George was a small, but tough and wiry gentleman who used to be employed in Jim Sykes' Garage on Fourth east in earlier days. Yes, he was tough. I've seen him in his early 80s shovelling snow in front of the funeral home when young men couldn't even navigate the streets in blizzards.

Always in his neat navy serge suit, and always a vest, George, despite his profession liked his joke. I remember once on a committee visiting the business firms to get donations for baseball. George asked us to "come back with him." We did, into his operating room. On the slab was resting a long human leg which he had brought from the hospital for disposal or something. I lost my breakfast. George smiled his enigmatic smile.

Another time a wonderful character, a district major in the local ranks in World War I, passed on, and his body rested in George's place. Among a coterie of his old comrades who came in a little group to pay their last respects when nobody else but George was around, included Lawyer Herb Cathrea, Nick Bretherton of the provincial police and, I think, Charlie Skeates. In their grief I don't think the boys were suffering, and as a token of last respects hid a bottle of whiskey in the casket. Who knows but George whether the bottle took the long journey. Actually life was most interesting—and pleasant—when everybody knew everybody in Swift Current, and life wasn't as complicated as it is today.

George's brother, Bobby Warren, was a loveable character, a veteran of the 209th. After a drink Bobby always wanted to make a speech, anyplace, preferably Central Avenue. Naturally it was the Irish in him. I recall not too long after the Armistice of 1918, that the Great War Veterans Association

had one of their first national conventions in Vancouver. The special train of delegates picked up a large number of us as it huffed westward, including Bobby Warren. At the opening session in the old Hotel Vancouver, Premier Oliver gave the welcoming speech. At that time we were still all heroes. At one point Premier Oliver, his voice filled with emotion, declaimed, "I just can't express myself at this time." From the back of the large hall came a loud voice, "Well, why in hell can't you go by freight?" Naturally it was Bobby Warren and it brought the house down. An unforgettable moment in history. Probably the only one left here now who remembers that is Charlie Skeates. Those were the days.

Another character mentioned previously herein was Nick Bretherton. Nick was a Lancashire lad, the toughest small man I ever met. How he got into the Mounties after being in the Provincial Police here I'll never know. He married one of the Tillison girls here. Tom Tillison had a bakery place for a time where McKenzie's Store is, while Sam Tillison worked at the power house. Nick was about 5-6 I think, built like a power house. Anyway Skeates and I ended up in the 46th battalion in France and the company sergeant major was Nick Bretherton, who incidentally won the Distinguished Conduct Medal and a Bar, and the Military Medal for bravery. You'd just have to expect that. After the war Nick was in the S.P.P. here, then joined the Mounties, incongruously small for that magnificent physique outfit, and was sent to Yorkton. His first day there a young bunch of toughs ridiculed the little guy on the street in a Mountie uniform. Nick shed his jacket and hat, waded in and spilled Yorkton blood all over the street. Later Nick became a Justice of the Peace at Yorkton. What a character!

Talking of local funeral homes in Swift Current through the years, can't remember too many. The first was O. B. Dreyer, the Hollywood type who wore sideburns like some do today; then Mr. Yule had his first place on Central in the Imperial Hotel annex. Then came Warrens, George and Charlie. I think if I remember right, Ralph Marlow had a funeral home for awhile on Central, and also now the Culhams. Just as an aside, Jim Culham, a Cabri lad, came to Swift Current to star on one of Swift Current Indians' great intermediate championship teams. For his size, one of the toughest defensemen ever to lace on skates; a fine citizen he turned out to be, too.

Teddy, the Waterman

I mentioned in a recent article that I had been loaned a diary kept by the late Teddy Cooper, who delivered water and drayed things for the little town of Swift Current when the Indian whoops of the Riel Rebellion were still hanging in the air. I knew Teddy later when he was caretaker of the ice rink about the corner of 5th East and Cheadle. He was one of the most gentle men I've ever met, and that kind were legion among the pioneers. The kids all loved him for he had a mound of patience and understanding. He spent most of his time tightening the straps on the early type skates for the wee 'uns.

His son Pat sent me the diary from Medicine Hat, where he now lives retired. Pat mentions that he was born in The Hat in 1900. "At that time the

closest doctor and hospital was in Moose Jaw or Medicine Hat. Mother had to catch the first passenger train out and got to the Hat in time."

I wonder how people in our fat-cat affluent society, who hate to walk two blocks to the supermarket, would consider living without a doctor or hospital nearby? The pioneers took all these things in stride. Some young people talk superciliously of the "generation gap"—what we, the older folk, did to upset the world. The truth is that some young people haven't got the guts the pioneers had to face up to things in life, and shout and protest a lot of nonsense sometimes.

Be that as it may, it was interesting to me also to read his parents' marriage certificate which he sent along. It was an unbellished piece of ordinary paper, about 6x8 inches, written in longhand. Brief and cryptic. "This certifies that the holy covenant of matrimony was duly entered into between Edwin Cooper and Margaret Victoria McDonald the 22nd of November, 1897 and was certified by me as official clergyman. S. G. Lawson." The piece of paper was witnessed by William McTaggart and Winnie McTaggart, and that was that.

Incidentally, the witnesses, the McTaggarts, owned the homestead which became the original townsite of Swift Current, situated by the mill, Railway Street East. The McTaggarts later lived across from the old school and collegiate on 2nd East, and we lived right behind them on 1st East for awhile.

Teddy Cooper's diary of 1903-4 had on the flyleaf some interesting 1901 statistics of the day: The Earl of Minto was Governor-General of Canada and Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Premier. Clifford Sifton, whose descendants now own daily papers in Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon, was Minister of the Interior. British Columbia's population was 190,000; P.E.I. 2,000; Montreal, 266,890; Toronto, 207,971; Winnipeg, 49,336; Vancouver, 26,194. Postage for letters was two cents. It noted also there would be four eclipses in 1903.

Most of the diary material for the tiny hamlet on Swift Current Creek, was centred on 1904, though some in 1903. Teddy Cooper had a water cart and without water folks just couldn't exist. One of the first entries was for January 2, 1904 and concerned one of Swift Current's first restaurants, run by Lee Chang. Teddy delivered half a barrel of water to him, and some more to people like the Jones, Marlows, Mrs. Cutting (mother of Mrs. Jack Lundholm of the Lyric), Mr. Stilwell, the Anglican reverend, Furnis, Rutherfords.

When I know what it costs to move any item in Vancouver nowadays, I marvel at the entries in the diary and for what men like Teddy worked those days. Teddy on Jan. 4, delivered five loads of cinders, charged \$1.50; a load of manure was marked down as 25 cents. Other pioneer names mentioned on January 5 for water deliveries were the Charles Reids, Pattersons, McTaggarts and Milburns. Then there was a charge which I can't figure out: "Cows to Bull, Bradshaw, 50 cents."

Mr. Cooper and his water wagon and dray was a glutton for work. Don't know when he slept, according to the diary. He delivered water in quantity for the McNeillies for 50 cents. The McNeillies were early C.P.R. employees, lived on Railway and when I came to Swift Current, the only tree in town was in front of their place. Son Alec followed as a C.P.R.er and was with many of the championship Indian hockey teams. In one day, Teddy put up horses for Ranchers McNee, George Smith from the Landing, for Leo Laroque, half breed from out Pelletier way and for four horses for a land

hunting outfit, charged \$1. He noted that on December 2 there had been a terrible blizzard, and November 3 was "like summer."

But Teddy Cooper was not only interested in mundane things those early days. He noted that he had written to Jackson, Mississippi for a "free book on hypnotism."

On March 3 he made a charge of "\$2.25 for a wagon team for three days at 75 cents. Gone to Aikins, west of Swift Current, for a load of posts and charged Bill McTaggart \$2." He drove some real estate men to the river, two days, \$6. On March 23 he conveyed Black and Snider to the river and back, \$6. He unloaded and delivered a freight car of groceries for Charlie Reid's store and three bucks was the charge.

So this is part of the saga of a Swift Current businessman as he worked to provide for a growing family in the early 1900's. One last item among the many in the diary. On March 3 he did some work on the new land office building, "excavation three and one half hours at 20 cents an hour." And, on December 25, this terse inscription: "Christmas."

Golf Thru the Years

This week, off the top of my head, a few recollections of the history of golf in Swift Current. The game flourishes here, no doubt about that. And Elmwood Golf Club of today is somewhat of a far cry from golf "as was" in the earlier days. I have mentioned previously about the sensation created when that Scottish lawyer, G. C. Thomson, first walked up Central Avenue in his plus fours and a bag full of sticks heading for the prairie to knock a few balls around. He probably made a hole in one at the first gopher hole, and believe me they were prolific.

The first recognizable course was on the south side of the tracks, and players had to battle cows, dogs and what not as hazards. Eventually they laid out the first Elmwood course southwest of its present location, the club house being a frame 2-storey home.

The present course was laid out by a Mr. Brinkworth, who was pro for some few years while his wife catered meals in the ramshackle clubhouse of the day. "Brink" later was the head totem at the beautiful Jasper National Park course in Alberta. But he revolutionized golf in Swift Current, an expert golfer in his own right.

Elmwood was more of a social gathering place in Brink's time, and some real gourmet banquets were laid out there on occasion. The 19th hole was a wet one on occasion, too. One of Brink's friends was a lieutenant-governor of Saskatchewan and he invited him from Regina for a soiree which we will not forget. The L-G got too many drinks and passed out in the course of the evening.

I even remember a gang of us putting on a last bachelor night out there when Bill Bebbington, Mutual Life's manager here, got married. We played golf amid hilarity through a whole moonlight night, and at daybreak finally were able to pinpoint the greens. Them were the days.

We had some mighty good golfers around especially in the 20's. And among the top flight was Jim Borthwick, all round athlete deluxe, also fellows like Dentist Dr. Ross, a leftie who could slam them a country mile and had

an unorthodox style. Also George Martin, a local electrician of Scottish descent. And among the consistent winners of the big Labor Day tourney which attracted golfers from all over the province was Jack Dingwall, Vanguard bank manager. Saw Jack not too long ago at White Rock, B.C. before he passed on. Jeweller Joe Fownes was a mighty tee hitter of the day.

Swift Current wasn't entirely in the golfing "sticks". Several times the famous trick-shot artist Joe Kirkwood came for exhibitions at Elmwood. One time the touring top pros of the world stopped off for a fling at the Elmwood links. I remember among them were Jock Hutchison and Chick Evans, the latter from Chicago who was the Arnold Palmer of his day. We really put on a "hospitality" show for the touring pros.

The present postmaster, Len Corrigan was a pretty darn good golfer in his day, so was Wes Robinson, now of Edmonton, who was manager of Swift Current Wholesale Grocery. He always favored a driver that had a handle like a whip. Wes played hockey for Swift Current as well as baseball on top teams, and after moving to Edmonton played on a MacDonald Brier winner.

Among the faces one would inevitably see on the Elmwood links was "Doc" Fields, Swift Current's first doctor, who, though corpulent, managed to play a fair game; also Dentist Dave McCord, Jim Clements, Jack Lundholm, Archie Walkinshaw, Fred Herman, and Baker Tom Tillison whose family claimed as cousin the famous English comedienne, Gracie Fields.

"Prof" Nelson Latour-Reid, who was principal of Swift Current's high school in and around the 1910-13 days, was a later day golfer who when he became deputy minister of education always came back from Regina for Labor Day tournament and loved the layout.

I guess George Bowers must have earned the best record for longevity among Swift Current golfers, for when I last heard he was in his eighties and still knocking the gutta-percha around. Jack Lundholm our theatre impresario, loved the links, which he helped so much to improve through the years, and this also applies to Gren Corbett who was my first boss on the Swift Current Herald in 1923 and who later finished up on The Sun as I did.

Tom Dohan, one of our earlier CP station agents, later in real estate, also was always interested in the treeing of the course in its earlier stages. Doc Jim Millar, the chiropractor loved his golf. He six-foot something, and myself five-foot nothing, had the speed record on Elmwood. One day when it was over 100 degrees in the shade we played a flight final for a Park Hardware trophy, I think. In that terrific heat we negotiated the course in exactly one hour for 18 holes. Who won? I don't remember, but I've got a battered old Park trophy on the shelf.

Our First Good Rink

Because of necessity Editor Friesen has sometimes to rearrange the sequence of these articles, I have to refer back to the fact that recently we dealt with the contribution to Swift Current of the late Jack Lundholm. Because I've had a look at Jack's scrapbook which he nurtured through the years, there are a few items of memorabilia which may be interesting; things which I knew but had forgotten about, and which all help to give newcomers a little idea of what the past Swift Current was like to live in.

Lots of golfers in the city now so it may be interesting to know that the clubhouse (once only a little shack) had its initial opening April 21, 1927, with Bill Dawson the contractor. We were all vastly proud of it, and the season that year opened May 24, with W. H. (Bill) Brinkworth the club pro.

It is also interesting that Elmwood was inspired and initiated back in 1921 at a meeting held one evening in Jim Clements rackety paint shop on 1st east, opposite the Legion hall. At that meeting were Jim, Frank Dawson, lawyer George Roth, Sanitary Inspector George Southon, "Prof." Latour Reid, Editor Sam Moore, W. S. Yule, the funeral director, and Frank Whittaker of Massey Harris.

Things moved those few years. The year previous, Citizens' Rink was built. The Winnipeg Tribune had a story on the event saying it had cost \$4,000. Actually I think it was \$13,000, probably \$50,000 less than it would cost today. Money was raised by selling \$25 bonds to the home folks. Frank West and Bert Hare were the prime financial wizards who organized the campaign.

That spring March 23, baseball was organized for the year in Frank West's office next to McKenzie's store. Dr. D. W. McCord was elected prexy with Howard Day, a brother to Hap Day, Toronto Maple Leaf coach, as secretary.

Back on November 18, 1924 the Kiwanis Club initiated "Native Sons Day" and Dr. Jim Whyte was program chairman. The Galloping Gourmet wasn't around those days so they had to find other ways for entertainment. Speakers represented as follows: Lawyer Jim Begg for Western Ontario, Lawyer A. B. Elliot for Quebec, Jake Kruse for Germany, Lawyer Herb Cathrea for Manitoba, Judge Dan Buckles for Nova Scotia, Jack Lundholm for Sweden, Plumber Jim Alexander for U.S.A., Sam Moore for Newfoundland. Yes, we had a polygot population.

Then there was an item in the scrapbook that from Dec. 17, 1949 to Jan. 18, 1950, there were 32 consecutive days where the temperature was well below zero, with a tops of 36 below.

Then there was an item about the CNR extension for a branch line which stopped at Neidpath with Swift Current to be the terminus. In 1949, April, we had a Board of Trade delegation meet with other district outfits at Gravelbourg to try to goad the government into action, as we had done innumerable times before. The delegation consisted of 4X bakery manager Dunc Mitchell, after whom Mitchell Field is named; Lundholm, Bradbrook, DesBrisay and Greenblat. So in the 60's as in the 30's, the end of the line remained at Neidpath, overgrown with weeds. But we had promises.

And it was like the No. 4 from the Canadian border to Malta, Montana, which was promised to be surfaced for some 40 years. We used to have innumerable interchanges of meetings with Malta and region folks, always with a Senator or two present, good cheer, good drinks and good fellowship. But I think up to today that stretch of highway is probably as rotten as ever it was. But Saskatchewan did its promised part of the job.

The scrapbook brought back memories of the days of World War II, when the British Commonwealth Air Training School was out at the airport, with some 1,500 men from all over the universe (it seemed) were there. Swift Current was a mighty busy place, and our citizens were very hospitable in entertaining the boys in their homes and they were days of a lot of fun.

On Nov. 24, 1942, they had a big concert party and competition out there to which the public was invited. A copy of the program shows that "the judges were Jack Lundholm and Jimmy Greenblat." Gad, what a choice!

With 10 years as Dust bowl and Depression to look back on, Swift Current was not down and out. In the 1943 Victory Loan, Swift Current went over the top first as 4,110 subscribers raised over a million dollars for the war effort.

And in 1944 from 7th to 14th in March, they had a "warm" spell with the mercury from a low of -39.7 to 2.8 below.

In 1929 the Elks lodge bought the historic Princess Royal Theatre for lodge rooms.

The scrapbook mentions one of the number of RCMP inspectors we had here. One of them was Lloyd Bingham, who later became a Superintendent in the force. Tall, blonde, handsome, one of the youngest to attain that rank, Lloyd was a hail fellow well met with all the folks. He later was sent to Ghana to organize their national security, retired and then became Chief of Police in Edmonton, suddenly died not too long ago.

We all knew someone else mentioning, "Deefy" Bannerman who ran one of the last livery barns in town. It was situated on Chaplin behind the Sask. Power building. Short, stubby, with a walrus mustache, he was a fine character, and could hear better than he was supposed to. Across from there was a half block of fenced vacancy which was a town open air skating rink for the kids.

Yes, a Corpse Shrinker

It's about time I wrote about one of the most fabulous, and probably misunderstood men who used to operate in Swift Current. W. J. (Bill) McIntyre, native of Bruce County, Ontario, who homesteaded at Success in 1909, came here in 1921 to start a Tannery business. It smelled to high heaven, but out of it came several lucrative local industries. He is now gone from this community which didn't always understand him, although I think he brought a great deal of publicity to Swift Current, more than people realized.

You had to know Bill to appreciate him. He was a tall, gaunt, soft spoken man who had wheels in his head, always inventing something. I listened to him often in my editorial office and liked him because he had a philosophy ahead of his time.

Bill was the guy who invented and perfected a life-sized horse, with a bunch of machinery in its guts, and the horse walked in Frontier Days parades. Mr. McIntyre from Swift Current was asked to show his horse in action at Madison Square Garden in New York and the Industrial Fair at Toronto around the 50's. He was mentioned in Time Magazine, an accolade for anyone. I wrote to the National Film Board at Ottawa and they sent out Isabel Kehoe, news reel director, and cameraman Phil Pendrelle, the CBC man who did the 6-day Israeli-Egyptian campaign later and earned notoriety; they filmed the horse in action and it appeared in Pathe News reels across the continent.

Bill had a foundry on Third West. I think it was where he perfected a grain loader, now being used by many farmers in the area and elsewhere and improved by his son, Jim who carried on the manufacturing end of his dad's business, adding some of W.J.'s other inventions. And the business is successful even though Dad Bill has passed on.

When, for various reasons, Bill's Tannery later became a liability, another son, Robert returned to Swift Current from Vancouver. He persuaded Bill to eschew the Tannery business and go into the saddle business seeing as how we had Frontier Days here and western style riding was on the increase. Bill finally consented and the present fine saddle and western equipment business on First West has very much justified the idea that Robert had.

It is interesting to note that a daughter, Margaret Taylor, had inherited Bill's flair for inventing things and carries on in the tradition by continuing with the gate he invented, also the oilers and salt dispensers.

Even Reader's Digest carried an item one time about Bill McIntyre's inventions. His mechanical horse was "ridden" at times by mayors of Toronto, Winnipeg and Saskatchewan towns and cities. Bill always stressed he was from Swift Current.

Bill's piece de resistance in the invention field was a fantastic machine which was supposed to shrink corpses (shorten them) to save burial room. When Bill brought the plans into my editorial room one day and discussed them, I own up to getting a little squeazy. It remained just an idea of course, as it did not appeal to many people, including Mrs. McIntyre who had been living in Victoria. I'll never forget the funny letter I got when I wrote the famous Canadian journalist, Bruce Hutchison, about this corpse business, who at that time was editor of the Victoria Times.

Bruce had been in Swift Current a few years before on a story for Macleans and interviewed me. Tommy Douglas also promised to look the corpse shrinker over when it was supposed to be shown at one of our Frontier Days. What a man!

Recently I heard from Mrs. McIntyre who had returned to Swift Current and was going through the voluminous correspondence he amassed in a lifetime.

Bill also took a great deal of interest in civic betterment. Mrs. McIntyre tells me that in his correspondence are letters from Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Premier Adenauer of West Germany, a country of inventions; Churchill, Foster Dulles, Diefenbaker, Pearson, Dean Rusk of the U.S. State Department to name only a few. Play that on your pianos, folks.

I sent a picture to Time Magazine of a Frontier Days parade of two local cowgirls on real horses which were nuzzling up to the mechanical horse. That's how real it was. "Time" thought they better not publish that one.

I felt good when Mrs. McIntyre wrote me recently: "I know that he always spoke highly of you. You always seemed to have time to listen to his sometimes fantastic ideas about all sorts of things."

Well, they called a lot of people "nuts" in past history, but that's what made the old world rotate and provided amenities of life far removed from the caveman days.

I think Bill McIntyre has a rightful place in the history of Swift Current.

It used to spoil my appetite for a day when I went into that old tannery on Cheadle West, but out of it came something wonderful, the fact that man can think ahead.

P.S.—Here's an unusual thing in connection with Bill's corpse shrinker. The night I had written this particular piece, I watched Mike Wallace, famous U.S. commentator on TV, telling of a commission in Washington, D.C. predicting that if things continue as they are today, in 500 years "there wouldn't

be anymore room in the whole of the U.S.A. to bury people." It was a documentary on cemeteries. Bill McIntyre, if you're listening way up there, I think you had something!

76 Ranch

About Butter and Eggs

When we talk of old established firms here, there are few which can surpass for local longevity the Swift Current Produce Co. It was near half a century ago, 1922, when Fred Ironside touched down in this little city to start that firm. While most businesses deal more specifically with retailing and contact with the consumer, Swift Current Produce, I think, can proudly look back on a half century in which it has contributed know-how and a better deal for dairy and poultry producers of this vast area. Before Fred Ironside got here, poultry, butter and egg production was a hit and miss business. Fred helped revolutionize that industry and Swift Current district is much the richer and more progressive because of his vision and far-sightedness.

Sure Fred made money, which is the objective of most people in this world, but he made it for others too. Fred was sharp and smart as a business man, and a happy kind of a guy with many gregarious facets to his character. Fred passed on in 1952, and then the business was carried on by his son, Jim, Earl Kelly and the late Bert Leader. Young Jim grew up on eggs, butter and poultry, especially turkeys which became a large part of the business. In later years Jim bought the Sanders ranch north of the city, a historic place, from John Sanders, whose dad was a Mountie involved in Riel Rebellion days out at The River crossing. Earl Kelly was one of the most adept ball players ever turned out in this city. They now call the place "76 Ranch", which was the registered name of his grandfather's place. By the way, it is no idle boast that if the chickens and turkeys handled by this firm were placed beak to tail-feathers they would easily stretch around the world.

Fred Ironside was the son of Robert Ironside of the old time firm of Gordon, Ironside and Fares. He learned the business in the packing houses in Montreal and Winnipeg. In 1921-22 he managed the firm's farm at Rush Lake. In the fall of '22 he came here to start the plant — primarily to process pigs. Later he switched to marketing butter, handling eggs and poultry, with a branch in Moose Jaw.

Fred was very active in promoting the production of eggs and poultry in this area and worked closely with the produce association to better grades of poultry and dairy products; not only here, but for the whole of Canada. He was one of the stern opponents of freight subsidies on feed grain to Eastern Canada and British Columbia. He predicted that it would increase production in those areas at the expense of Saskatchewan. This I think, has come true—as today Saskatchewan is one of the lesser producers of dairy and poultry products.

While we've had firms like Saskatchewan Creamery in the city, a provincial complex, Swift Current Produce has been more or less of a family business for near 50 years. Fred Ironside, who always had a fresh, cheery looking face, and the inevitable cigar stuck in his mouth was an interesting person in the community of his day and took a great deal of interest as well in civic matters. He was a long time member of the Kiwanis club.

Oddly enough, as I write this in 1970, I can remember as a boy that my father who was a merchant in Winkler, Manitoba at least 70 years ago, used to ship butter and eggs to Gordon, Ironside and Fares in Winnipeg. This produce came from the nearly predominant Mennonite farmers of that district. They traded at our store, eggs and butter for merchandise. After the turn of the century my dad sold out in Winkler, moved to Winnipeg and was on the road for the company on the Deloraine line of the CPR, buying butter and eggs from merchants in the small towns to be shipped to Gordon, Ironside, and Fares at Winnipeg.

Fred Ironside had an inseparable pal, and this was Edgar Burke, who should be mentioned as among the old time citizens who over the span of the years contributed a lot to Swift Current. Edgar came here, I think, around 1912, ten years before Ironside. If I remember correctly, he took over the Moote Coal Co. and dealt in coal and later years fuel oil, too. Mr. Moote had started the business years before, coming from the States. One of his sons, Leslie, was a schoolmate of mine and in World War II died on a Jap prison ship. Edgar Burke's son, Douglas, took over active running of the business after his dad passed on. At one time a partner with Edgar was a Mr. Hemenway. The company premises were on east Railway right up against the elevators. Doug was very active in the militia, served with distinction in the Second World War and later had the rank of Lt. Colonel, heading the militia here; and in recent years identified with the top brass of the Saskatchewan Civil Defence. The Burke family was a real pioneer family of this city.

History of the Old '76

Last week this column reminisced about Fred Ironsides and the Swift Current Produce Co. I've always seemed to have known about the Gordon, Ironsides and Fares ranch at Rush Lake through the early days. But somehow or other in my some 35 years of newspapering in Swift Current it appears I missed altogether the romance of this big land complex and how it was tied in with our widespread district in the pioneering days when cattle was king.

My brain started rattling with the fact that son Jim Ironside bought the Sanders ranch northwest of the city and calls it the 76 Ranch. The original 76 Ranch complex was born in 1885, when a large English financial outfit named Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Co. started a venture in which sheep were to be the principal element, on ten farms — one of which was situated at Swift Current. Sir John Lister Kaye headed the contingent of British personnel which came over. The story is quite familiar that the sheep venture was doomed to failure by a series of sad natural events, including the dread disease anthrax which decimated huge flocks. Many of Sir Kaye's men became pioneer ranchers around Swift Current subsequently. The company was glad to sell out in 1893, to the Canadian Land and Ranch Co. and they took over the 76 brand. As Fred's father was later registered namee of the brand, I presume that Gordon, Ironsides and Fares, then the big packing house complex of Winnipeg and Montreal, became the owners of the vast leases.

Among my memorabilia I couldn't find anything I could stick my teeth in about the Ironsides and 76. Then I happened to look in my little library and discovered a book, "The Great Canadian Range" by Phil S. Long, which

*my grand father had 76 pasture land now
my brother own, there is 76. Will & Past Still There
2008*

had been loaned to me by J. Gordon Cooper of the pioneer Cooper family, but somehow I had neglected to read it. And herein was the answer. The book was published in 1963 by Ryerson Press, Toronto.

Owned by Gordon, Ironsides and Fares, Limited, one of whom was Fred Ironsides' father, the 76 was quite a ranch in any man's language. It followed the White Mud River (now the Frenchman) from the east end of Cypress Hills to the Montana border. The White Mud originated at Cypress Lake which is south of Maple Creek, and winds through Saskatchewan. In the heart of the Great Range the 76 held land from Crane Lake along the main line of the CPR, also a big ranch at Rush Lake. There were four huge leases from the Dominion government adding up to 250,000 acres, each surrounded by three-wire fences. Gordon, Ironsides and Fares ran 12,000 cattle, the largest of its kind in Canada. The new owners carried on the 76 brand.

The home ranch of the 76 in 1917 when the author's father came from Montana to become general manager, was on the White Mud River flat, 30 miles south of Shaunavon. The home ranch was called 50 Mile Ranch.

The First World War years apparently spelled doom for Gordon, Ironside and Fares Ltd., who took quite a loss in their ranching operations, but it was nothing compared to their great losses in the packing industry — their main business. The author writes of Mr. Fares telling his father they had lost a million dollars on butter alone at the end of the war because of storage and closed markets that had not been anticipated; also they held Dominion leases that were probably soon to be thrown open to homesteaders. It seemed to be the closing chapter for the large cattle grazing companies. Anyway, Gordon, Ironsides and Fares finally sold out to Swift and Company, and I think this later became Swift Canadian Co.

I had related in the previous column that Fred Ironsides had managed the old farm at Rush Lake from 1921-22 before he came to Swift Current to start the present Swift Current Produce Co.

This is a most interesting saga of a pioneer Canadian family wrapped up in Canadian industry, which had its roots in an English colonization company, which failed in a development program after starting out with high hopes in 1888. Then it comes down to the fact that the old 76 Ranch complex went to the famous old Canadian meat packing company of Gordon, Ironside and Fares; then from one of the farms at Rush Lake, to Swift Current with a scion of the family, Fred, starting a produce company and then young Jim taking over the business, buying a home ranch for himself and naming it the 76 Ranch. Quite a story.

And the present Swift Current company is tied up big in the turkey business too, which they have skillfully developed in this area; a product which the wealthy Englishmen of the first 76 never even dreamt of.

The old 76 Ranch barn and some buildings here which had been a part of the old romantic ranching days of the pre-rebellion days, which were situated not too far east and south of Oman school on the southside, were finally sold by the City in the very early part of the 1950's for \$515. I recall at the time there was some grumbling that the barn should have been preserved as history. Jim Taylor was mayor at the time. I'm pretty sure he told them you couldn't stop progress. Jim, a tall man of Scottish origin, was quite a prominent figure in the fifties. He had been in the Saskatchewan Provincial Police, stationed in Swift Current and when this force was disbanded, he went into the R.C.M.P. here, then back to civilian life.

First City Directory

I have in my possession an old earmarked copy of what is probably Swift Current's first city directory, the Henderson Directory, for 1916. As Swift Current became defacto a City in 1915, that is the year it likely was compiled, on a house to house and business to business basis. As I have always understood that there had to be 5,000 or more population to get city status at that time, I have checked the directory and find that the name to name population in the book numbers approximately 2,500. Frank West, the first City Mayor, 1914 and 15, often told me that the enumeration to get "city status" was accomplished by counting every dog, cat and chicken in town. Now I believe him.

It's an interesting directory in the light that the population here now, they tell me, is over 16,000. On the fly leaf of the directory is the name "Angus MacDonald", some of whose family still live here. I remember Angus well, at that time a teamster with City Cartage, and later in business for himself. Angus was one of that breed of pioneers of fine character and a propensity for hard work. He was also a genius on the principle of leverage. I recall somewhere in the 1940's, we bought a new linotype for The Sun for the old two-storey cement building on Railway, west of the Imperial hotel. How to get that big machine up into the top storey pressroom? Call Angus MacDonald, of course. He came, glanced at the scene, had a great big hole punched in the wall on the east side, and proceeded to fashion a home-made derrick which lifted the many-ton machine up and into the building. Only the Egyptians with their pyramids could have equalled that feat. Angus never talked much, but did a lot. Anyways, I don't know how I ever got that copy of the directory but apparently it belonged to him.

As there were a lot of the boys away on active service, maybe the population could have been 3,000, who knows. Probably the biggest employer of labor at that time in town was the Canadian Pacific Railway. Checking the directory, I found 113 names designated as being identified with the CPR in one way or another. Of course this was an important divisional rail centre at that time, midway between Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat.

There were quite a few Japanese working on the CPR, also some from European countries, mainly wipers, car cleaners and on the section. Just for an example here are a few chosen at random: Nishiyama Simockicki, J. Musyzka, Wojeich Manchicwicz, John Lyunggren, Pete Krynoski, And, the directory featured many other names which are interesting in context for they reveal that increased immigration to Canada had brought a lot of new people in, all looking for work and freedom and liberty.

For instance, there was a blacksmith named Andrew Zamlak; a Mr. Zaskowiak, well driller; a nurse named, Mrs. Twiddy; a pianist at the Princess Royal theatre was Julius Vrsteshelen; Bill Theodoridas owned the Baltimore Cafe on Central, naturally from Greece; there was a Grace Tauffenbach; and a Magnus Seleglid, and Joe Boo was with the city works department. Christ Coligs was a waiter at the Savoy Cafe and to add class to the population there was Hart De Witt, clerk at the Land Titles Office.

The directory showed there were only 21 Smiths living in town (for shame), and 18 by the name of Ross. The Mc's and the Mac's were prolific. Believe it or not, there were 135 of them in that era in Swift Current.

Whoever was responsible for the getup of Henderson's Directory was an acute optimist. For example, in the foreword on the first pages is quite a dissertation beginning with this line: "That Swift Current occupies a strategic location is evidenced by the actions of the great railway companies whose lines will soon be radiating therefrom in twelve to fifteen directions." After declaiming on the main line of the CPR, the Vanguard line; and the CNR within a "few miles of Swift Current", the following is the payoff, as appearing in the directory

"The Grand Trunk Pacific propose entering Swift Current from Watrous at an early date and will ultimately continue their line southwest towards the U.S. boundary. The road will also run a line north to Biggar to connect with their main line. Bonds for the extent of \$450,000 have been guaranteed by the Saskatchewan Government for GTP terminals for Swift Current."

"The Great Northern have also surveyed a line through Swift Current extending northwest, which will make it a divisional point on all four great transcontinental railways giving it the most enviable railway facilities in Western Canada."

Anyway, no community ever progressed without a bunch of optimists as citizens. And we sure had them those days, believe me. If you think Swift Current wasn't an up and coming metropolis in 1915-16, the directory shows we had twelve paid volunteer firemen, and value of school property was \$350,000.

About the Rotary Club

This week (Feb., 1970), Swift Current's first service organization, the Rotary Club, celebrates its golden anniversary, 50 years of service to the community. Some call these clubs glorified singing get-togethers by "the establishment". Nothing is farther from the truth. Rotary clubs throughout the world haven't solved the problem of man's inhumanity to man, but they have truly contributed much to communities and nations as have the many other service clubs since established and flourishing.

In connection with this celebration I thought it might be interesting to have a few tidbits about the citizens who were club presidents through the years; just ordinary guys you met up with and chatted with daily along Central Avenue. I don't think many of them ever achieved wealth in the Texas fashion.

The first meeting to discuss organizing a Rotary club was in the lunchroom of Bill Cooper's department store (now Pioneer Co-op) Jan. 26, 1920, with Bill as chairman, at the direction of District Governor A. G. Adams of Fort William. January 31 came the charter, and Mr. Cooper the first president.

For the year 1921-22, the club was directed by Dr. D. W. Graham, one of the originators of "The Clinic" on Central. He later practiced in Victoria, B.C. Rev. W. A. Guy of Knox Church succeeded him for balance of the term, and he was followed by dentist Dr. G. L. Cameron. Here was a tremendous after-dinner speaker with a fund of funny stories, didn't use notes, and a good enough dentist to head administration of the Canadian Dental Corps in World War II after service as a Lt. Colonel in War I.

Then came J. Gordon Taggart, superintendent of the experimental station, later minister of agriculture in the Saskatchewan cabinet, then deputy minister

at Ottawa under Jimmy Gardiner. He was chairman of the Food Board in World War II. Next came Charlie Bothwell, lawyer, later to serve as district court judge, and represented Swift Current-Maple Creek in Ottawa for some years, a staunch Liberal. Next came Reggie McCaul, sauve manager of the Canadian Bank of Commerce; J. E. (Ted) Hemenway, superb skip, manager of Canadian Guaranty Trust Co., which was above the Bank of Commerce. He was followed by Sid Inch, Kings Bench court reporter, 6 ft. 5, later drowned in a fishing boat tragedy in B.C.; Art Wigmore, of whom I've written before; Roy T. Graham, badly wounded overseas as a major in the 209th, later a lawyer, member in the House of Commons, a judge of the Queen's Bench Court; Pete Rooney, already described in previous columns; Art Forsythe, manager of a grocery wholesale; Dr. H. C. Burroughs, splendid citizen who served on school boards, etc.; Lawyer G. C. Thomson, Jim Greenblat, W. W. Smith, citizen deluxe; Bob Bridgman, manager of I.H.C. here; Gordon Cooper, Howard Couch, collegiate principal; L. B. Thomson, experimental station superintendent; Harry James, wholesale grocery manager; Ernie Marrison, manager of Woolworths.

To follow him came Fred Ashford, city clerk; Lowell Doughty, soils research head at The Farm; Grant Denike, to become superintendent of The Farm; Joel Kling who had a clothing store opposite the depot; Charlie Ellis, wholesale manager; George Milburn, customs officer, scion of an old pioneer family here; Al Shogan, druggist; J. A. B. Will of the Creamery; Sid Wik, accountant; Alex Kelly, a big genial Irishman; Jack Kohn, manager of Christie Grants; Doug Burke of the long time Burke fuel business; Stewart Shields of the PFRA; Stewart Robertson, first secretary of the Health Region; Doug McKenzie of the pioneer family; E. J. Melhoff of the electrical business later to become a District Governor of Rotary; Dr. Frank Pierce, Bob Burroughs whose dad had also been a president of the club; Dr. Ted Donegan, now a practicing ophthalmologist in Saskatoon, came originally from South Africa; Doug Grant of The Farm. They were followed by Harold Allan, Stu Robertson, Dr. David Heinrichs, Hans Korven, Bob MacWilliam, Dr. Noble Irwin, Joe Hahn and Jack Smith.

Among the club's civic projects and they were many, was Memorial Park which was at one time a slum of shacks. The work of cleaning and planting, etc. was done by the members themselves. They were also originators of the Kiddies Winter Carnival, Urban-Rural annual banquets, awarding of many, many, scholarships through the years, early supporters of the Boys Band, before radio and TV, presentation of amateur shows, bringing in experienced thespians to coach the actors; numberless good civic deeds.

Weekly luncheons, as I recall, started at the Empress hotel, where host Rotarian Bill Drever provided a menu luncheon of choice that was gastronomically gorgeous. In later years the members ate at the Healy Hotel after the Empress burned to the ground one Christmas morning in the early 30's, and later at the Diana and Picadilly cafes, and in later years at the Skyline on No. 1 Highway. Through the years among the outstanding song leaders were W. W. (Bill) Smith and Bob Bridgman; they just loved to sing — and sing — and sing.

Odd Rotary years' recollections: When Gordon Cooper, George Thomson and I drove to Winnipeg to attend a Rotary Conference, stopping at Brandon en route dared staunch teetotaler George Thomson to accompany us into a beer parlor, first time in his life. He was awed. And, coming back one night

with Charlie Bothwell from a president-secretary's conference in Yorkton, getting lost on old No. 1 highway this side of Herbert, winding up in a cow pasture where we slept in the car all night. A judge and me. My first meeting in my presidential year was a joint meeting with Moose Jaw club in Grant Hall Hotel, Moose Jaw—so scared to death couldn't masticate the elks meat which they had provided as piece de resistance . . . or something.

Oil and Then Helium

Newcomers to Swift Current are enjoying another era of growth and expansion, judging by the weekly issues of *The Sun* I get out here on the Pacific coast. I was privileged, as many others, to have gone through two earlier eras filled with excitement. One was the early 1900's as agricultural settlement overrode the ranching and first pioneer days; the other came in the 1950's when we finally got our bridge across the South Saskatchewan at the Landing and then the exploration and discovery of oil, and with its natural gas.

The Fosterton discovery broke the ice, and from then on for years everyone lived in a dream world where Swift Current was to be another Dallas or Houston, Texas. Well, I think some of the oil has rubbed off on the district, no doubt, but, as the Crown (province) owned most of the mineral rights, there have been no millionaires overnight.

I wrote thousands of stories in *The Sun*—on oil, of course, and finally it got common place, like the little clipping I've saved which was dashed off-hand: "Well, oil is now flowing from the Dollard field on the Dollard-Cantuar pipeline and on to Minneapolis. It took 43,000 barrels of oil to fill the 12-inch 40 miles long line which terminates at Cantuar where it connects with the main line terminating at Minneapolis. Capacity can be 10,000 barrels a day. Commenced in early August the estimated cost of the project \$2,900,000."

In the late 50's came the first rumblings of there being helium, that rare space-age necessity, in the district. Two young promoters reached town from the cities and started touting International Helium Corporation which apparently had leases to explore. Bankers, the Chamber of Commerce, newspapers, all of us were caught in the new glow. And I think a lot of us were "caught" in the "after-glow." A pair of slick cookies. However, as it happened, one of the largest known deposits of helium in the world was subsequently discovered north of the city some 12 miles away and a plant there is now exporting helium to many parts of the world from Swift Current. But it was a bitter lesson for many who bought stock, showing most of us were ripe for picking and awfully naive.

Quarter of a century ago? Just flicking through some of my old records. 1944 was a war year, and what was exciting news those days? Well, it was exciting for a couple of folks. Jim Waller, of the CP Express won a \$5,000 home in a lottery draw at Niagara Falls, and W. G. Campbell of Neville won a house in a draw from Winnipeg, took a \$10,000 cheque instead . . . with wartime grain prices high government statistics showed that Swift Current district was the "largest initial grain shipping point in the world." The civic elections? Well into office went teacher Ken Rutherford as mayor, aldermen were flour mill manager Jim Aitkin, Lawyer John Friesen now a judge, Coke

man Bob Dahl and CP Express man Hank Day . . . Swift Current's first feeder show auctioned off 260 cattle for \$10,500 . . . 6,729 No. 5 ration books went out . . . Havelock Cail won the Elmwood Labor Golf championship . . . Oh yes, there were 19 candidates on the list for election . . . The Sun set a precedent by shutting the presses for two weeks while employees took their vacation enmasse . . . It was a year for historic places changing hands; the city sold the old '76 ranch buildings on the southside for \$515; The Old Reid block built by pioneer Charlie Reid and the 1903 built Imperial hotel got new owners.

More of just chit-chat: Had a letter asking who had the first implement agency in Swift Current. Subject to correction would have to say Jim Sykes who had a blacksmith shop on Central across from the Swift Current Clinic from about 1903. With the advent of the homesteaders, he secured the Sawyer-Massey agency which he carried on for some years . . . another often asked question when I was on The Sun: Where does the name Swift Current come from? Well the Cree Indian word "Saskatchewan" is supposed to mean Swift Current.

Ran into an item about Archie Galbraith, which reminds me that much of Swift Current's earlier development could be traced to the efforts, among others of course, of Old Country fellows. Archie was one of those. He passed on around the age of 90. He opened a grocery store about 1906 where the Galbraith block is on the southeast corner of 1st East and Railway; then built the block itself in 1919. Archie worked on construction of the CPR railway, farmed near Swift Current, homesteaded at Fleming, Sask. Had also a gold mine in South Africa and during the Boer War worked on supplying beef for the services. Those old pioneers of Swift Current were certainly not panty-waist guys, even tho' they were all so mild mannered and had wonderful character. Archie was also a long time strong adherent of Knox Church.

Indians—But Hockey

In threading through the history of Swift Current and its various areas of sport, there must be a place for its most exciting and rewarding period in hockey. Between the 1911-12-13 "professional" team period and the early 20's after Citizens Rink was built, there was a veritable hiatus. Nuthin' much happened. But, Citizens Rink with its obstructing posts and poor seating arrangement was a veritable palace to what we had before, and thereafter ensued a most exciting decade of hockey, which for public interest may never again be equalled.

The famous Swift Current Indians, from the late 20's to the early 40's when intermediate hockey flourished in Western Canada, were great teams. And so were our many rivalries and the quest for the yearly championship was stupendous for civic pride and enthusiasm. Often special trains had to be chartered for the fans of the Vanguard line and the Empress line who were as tight on the Indians as we were in town. And the Indians of those days, buttressed by starry imports, many of whom stayed on, married, and became fine citizens, were as top flight in Sask. as the Montreal Canadiens are in the NHL today.

But good hockey got its start actually in the 1924-25 season when Swift Current came out of its shell and entered the Tri-City Senior League with

Regina Aces and Moose Jaw Millers. The insignia on our sweaters, believe it or not, was "BA 9", and was taken from a local group who played kinda shinny hockey and called themselves "The Back Alley Nine". But the team had some players of real senior calibre. As I look at a group photo of that team, there was Johnny Sanders, law student, Howard Day, brother of Hap Day, coach of the Toronto Maple Leafs; Dentist "Doc" Dave McCord, Postmaster Hugh Corrigan, grey thatched, Harry Sinclair, Charlie Lee, bank teller J. S. McGraw, Jim Borthwick, bank clerk Gale Catherwood whose sister Ethel was a Canadian gold medalist at the Olympics, "Wes" Robinson of S.C. Grocery Ltd., who had played with Portland Rosebuds in the old NHL, goalie Len Mitchell. Dr. J. P. Whyte was president, A. B. Cameron, secretary and Greenblat, a dubious manager and coach. Feelings used to run high that season. Recall playing in Moose Jaw one night (and a special train of fans took us there) and an irate fan threw a large chunk of coal at Doc McCord, rushing up the boards, and felled him for hospital and stitches.

Intermediate hockey succeeded the Tri-City League, under aegis of the S.A.H.A. and became The Thing. The Western Canada championship was always the goal. Swift Current, like other places, went in for some "imports". Yorkton, Melville, North Battleford, Kerrobert, Moose Jaw became our bitter rivals. The playoffs every spring were really something. Many an NHL star came out of these intermediate teams. I can recall Sid Abel, late coach and manager of Detroit Red Wings and his several brothers playing here for Melville. And I recall the civic mortification one spring when the Indians had to play off for the Southwest title before going into finals and were knocked out in our own backyard by—who? the little town of Fillmore. We never did get over that one.

There were many who helped promote hockey in those years of our grandeur. Fred Herman. O. E. (Ole) Thompson the car and auto parts tycoon. Ridge Booker, Frank Dickson and so many more. We had many local boys who developed into superlative stars, like Alex (Muck) McNeillie, Hy and Sonny Grinder, Earl and Edler Knipfel, Jimmy Sykes, Jim Borthwick. And among the "brought in" stars, like Steve Buzinski, who in a war year went to the New York Rangers for a season and whose brashness tickled the cynical New York sports writers. Steve, through the years, became a fixture on the Experimental Farm staff; Glen Downing, also a staffer at the Farm, the Kunsman brothers from Gull Lake, "Tippy" Hoffas from north of the River; Cal Pascoe and Stan Kjasgaard who came from Moose Jaw ranks and became residents, citizens, and married here; fellows like Len Corrigan and a great goalie of his day Cy Cowan was brought in from Brandon, and has been a solid business man here ever since.

When Citizens Rink was built we had top notch junior and senior teams of the day come here for exhibitions, and local fans were thrilled. We've had the famous Regina Pats when they were the talk of Canada, coached by Al Ritchie. Players like Johnny Gottselig of the Chicago Black Hawks were here as a junior and many, many who also later made the NHL. We used to get, seasonally, the Notre Dame Hounds coached by Father Athol Murray, and that's when we had our first glimpse of Jackie McLeod, later to play with New York Rangers, represented Canada in international hockey as player and coach. He was something to behold when a youngster playing for Father Murray.

Spring playoff games brought huge outside crowds into Swift Current, for the Indians represented "the district" in what was then big league hockey to our standards. Never forgot the memorable trip many of us made with the team to Nanaimo, B.C., for the Western Canada championship. Edler Knipfel was the coach of that Indian team. My roommate at a Nanaimo hotel was Don Dennis, owner of the Picadilly Cafe on Central Ave. Don was a loud snorer, which forced me to spend the night in a chair downstairs in the lobby. If Don reads this, he'll know for the first time why I didn't see him again until morning of that memorable playoff day.

There was Rum-Running

Recently in a supermarket I bumped my shopping cart into another and lo and behold, here was a story. The other pusher was an old friend of the early days in Swift Current, still remembered, I'm sure, by many; none other than J. V. Stinson, a sergeant with the old R.N.W.M.P. and a corporal with the old Saskatchewan Provincial Police who used to be stationed in and around Swift Current from 1916 on into the 20's and 30's. A little stooped maybe, but still 6 foot 3 and pinkcheeked at 78.

Old timers around Cadillac, Orkney, Govenlock, Shaunavon will also remember "Stinnie" as he was affectionately known, in the romantic "rum running" days of the early 20's, when the highways between Swift Current, Shaunavon, Maple Creek, Regina re-echoed to the roar of powerful cars filled with Canadian "likker" racing for the border and from the police.

Over a coffee we reminisced for an hour or so. Stinnie came here when the R.N.W.M.P. barracks was a big former residence way up on East Cheadle, and the Inspector was Jack Richards, a real martinet with a Kaiser mustache, who chewed a big plug of tobacco every day and could spit tobacco juice into a spittoon in his office at any range with uncanny accuracy. He had one unusual phobia; he didn't like Englishmen. Many will also remember Sgt. Frank Baxter, that big, burly wonderful guy who was around here for years, Constable Potter and others. Those days they didn't have immature punks calling policemen "pigs". We knew them all intimately and with great respect.

In the early 20's another police force came into being, the Saskatchewan Provincial Police. They were quartered here in the Johnson Block on Cheadle West and to them came "Stinnie" from the Mounties; Jim Taylor, the lanky Scotsman who became a Mayor of Swift Current eventually, and the swash-buckling Inspector Bill Stewart. Jim Taylor later went back to the Mounties and rose to Inspector.

Those prohibition days there were authorized wholesale liquor warehouses in many Saskatchewan points, from which liquor was shipped "inter-provincially only". And that's what started the rum-running and bootlegging.

The Hudson Bay operated one here, and as I remember it was in the back of the Imperial Hotel building. The rumrunners with souped-up cars from Montana and other States, operated at bases in small towns all along the border. Most of them carried guns strapped to their legs inside the pants, had tough women with them and while awaiting operation orders had a high time in small towns. There were plenty of high-jacking episodes, shooting, even murders in bringing the cargoes of booze across the border. The money

to start one of the greatest of present day multi-million dollar liquor dynasties of Canada came, allegedly and very likely, from the highways connecting Saskatchewan to Montana.

Stinnie recalls there were 12 such outlets at Maple Creek. And it was worthwhile for modern day Jesse James' operating from the United States. Stinnie said they could pick up liquor at \$29 a case over here, run into Montana and get \$125 a case for it.

One night, he recalls, they went after 11 carloads streaking for the border. The operations were mainly spread out from Great Falls and Havre, Montana. They were exciting days for the police around this area.

There used to be daily runs through Swift Current of freight trains which had umpteen cars of liquor attached. It was no secret here in those days of the early 20's that some CPR employees and their friends used to have lots of fun, especially at the west-end crossing, when the freights used to be conveniently stopped there, seals broken on the liquor cars, a lot of cases dumped off and put into waiting cars, and then sealed up again. It was considered fair game to do this because it was considered the liquor laws were pretty stupid and only helped to make a lot of racketeers rich.

This is gospel truth and illustrates what things were like in those prohibition days. It was around 1920, I think, that us fellows one night were going to attend a dance at the Prince Royal theatre, which had a moveable floor those days and was the popular spot for waltzes and fox trots. We went to pick up a CPR employed friend at his rooms in a local block. His clothes closet he showed us, was filled to the ceiling with cases of scotch and rye. How come? You guessed it. Because those were prohibition days.

Oh yes, Stinnie was telling me that not only did the rum runners from the Montana side use souped-up cars, but recalls one load of liquor trying to make the grade was in a big wagon hauled by six horses.

The Saskatchewan Provincial Police bowed out of Swift Current and were disbanded altogether. I guess it was around 1928. I recall the loose talk around the town when one day Inspector Bill Stewart came back to town after a border foray, owner of the biggest Cadillac coupe I ever saw, a beauty. And that was his car thereafter. Some said it had belonged to a notorious rum-runner from Yorkton. But those were the days, after the Big War. Stinnie said that some evenings and nights the highway crossings from Saskatchewan to the Montana border were heavy with a pall of dust—rum running cars in action. It was big money and worth the risks.

Stinnie told me another funny story, of dropping into the hotel at Admiral one hot day, in uniform. It was owned by a Chinese gentleman at that time. He asked for a cold ginger ale, and mine host reached into a tub of ice, opened a bottle and poured out a glass full. It was pure rye whiskey! Mine host had picked it up by mistake—and was scared to death. But Stinnie didn't pinch him, he said. He just downed the whiskey, to the everlasting gratitude of the Chinese hotel owner, who thereafter treated him like a king.

Who Lived in the H-B

A little pot-pourri this week, of a varied nature.

Once again have had a query about cemeteries here, as to their early history. I kind of had an idea that among the first of the burial grounds

was at the present site of Elmwood school, because I remember when they removed remains for re-interment at Mount Pleasant. But in going through old clippings (and now I remember) was a story I once had in The Sun from Bill McTaggart, who came here with his parents in 1891, from Broadview where his dad was section foreman for the CPR.

Bill told me, as an aside, that he knew three Indians were buried where the Union Hospital is, and two where Kiwanis park is. He also said that Swift Current's "first" cemetery was on the property between the corner of Second East and Cheadle and the Catholic church. As the hamlet grew and became a village, the cemetery became too small. The council of the day bought 80 acres of land from his father, William McTaggart, Sr., whose homestead abutted the village on the east (starting about 6th Avenue) and incorporated 160 acres that included Swift Current Creek. Forty of those purchased acres were turned over for an Anglican cemetery and 40 acres to the Presbyterian church for a similar purpose; and these served the community until the old Mount Pleasant was established after the town became a city in 1915.

Recently Bill Smith, Jr., then secretary manager of the Chamber of Commerce sent me a flock of beautifully lithographed material which the Chamber has got out to dramatize Swift Current's growth, bring in tourists, etc. Which is fitting for the near 16,000 population of this city. "Young Bill" as I always knew him is, of course, a chip off the old block, our long time friend W. W. (Bill) Smith, Sr., now deceased, who for near half a century was one of our greatest boosters and civic minded guys. I note on one brochure that we now have 11 schools, 26 churches, 4 hotels and 12 motels and 7 parks. Not bad. Contrast that to 57 years ago, the year before this community got city status, we had 8 chartered banks, 5 "fully modern hotels", 5 churches, 7 lumber yards, 6 elevators and of all things a "brass and iron bedstead and mattress factory."

It is interesting to recall that the same year we refer to, council voted \$40,000 to have a Calgary firm bore for a natural gas well on the south side, which once in a while spewed out a little flame but was later abandoned altogether.

Not too long ago I noted in The Sun that the Healy-Booker block had changed hands and undergone some considerable renovation. For over half a century this edifice was, in fact, the hub around which Swift Current revolved, because at the corner of Central and Cheadle swarmed most of the town's activity. You just couldn't go anywhere without passing the H-B, and in the earlier days especially, that's from where all the gossip and the loungers emanated. And the Healy Hotel has changed hands too. A sigh from many. This at one time was the Royal York of Saskatchewan. What memories!

I don't know who occupies the Healy-Booker block now, but here's a sketchy rundown of who lived, loved and died in that historic block around the time of World War I and that's a few dust storms long gone.

Down in the basement was the Olympic Bowling Parlor (what a misnomer) but us kids shot many a game of pool there. If you went on a survey of the first floor up you'd find the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire had an office; Grinder and Gurney, real estate office; Dr. Donald E. Ross, CPR doctor and who later started the first big clinic co-operative in Los Angeles which at one time had some 500 doctors; he became a wealthy tycoon, did Dr. Donald. Then there was Doc Lamphere, the dentist. Dr. H. C.

Burroughs, physician, W. H. Wilkins, optician, the J.I. Case Threshing Machine Co. office, and some living suites.

On the second floor you'd go into Maulson and Potter's law office, Mack's Business College, law firm of Buckles, Donald and MacPherson, the first and last of these three became judges; and living suites, including that of John Healy who was liquor store manager later for a few years. On the third floor you'd find about 10 suites, including the living quarters of such well known citizens as O. B. Dreyer, the undertaker; Postmaster John White, Dr. Thomas Babe, Ken Leach who operated the Eagle Theatre and Joe Grojean and Mrs.; an implement man.

And in that block of the H-B, adjacent, such places as the City Harness Shop, A. E. Sparshatt, the auctioneer and Fred Tabartel, a vulcanizing shop, and across the street the Salvation Army. The ground floor front corner was taken up, a good deal of it, with the O'Sullivan's Brothers ladies wear and millinery store, from which came a lot of the fashions worn by ladies of that day. A little later the Mutual Life of Canada had it's district office on the ground floor, managed first by Charlie Mooney, the tall, greying, svelte looking guy and intimate rollicking friend of Lawyer Charlie Bothwell, town solicitor and later a Judge. Into the Mutual Life office subsequently came Bill Bebbington as manager and later Fred Herman, who threw away his pharmacist degree from the U. of S. and became a very successful insurance man.

The Three Musketeers

When Swift Current started to "grow up" in the very midst of the western drouth period and depression days, when a grasshopper scourge was adding to the disturbing economic confusion, the community was very lucky that in the fall of 1931 three unobstrusive young fellows arrived here to teach school. They became close friends. I would hazard the statement that in the ensuing near forty years no three men had more to contribute to the all round well-being of Swift Current or have had such an impact on the community. I refer to Ken Lewis, Ralph Desbrisay and Kem Aberdeen, for years known as the "Three Musketeers".

By 1970 these three gentlemen had together done 113 years of teaching duty in Swift Current— had gone from the bottom of the teaching ladder, up every rung, each finished up as principal of public schools or collegiate, and were of our most substantial citizens. But what was just as important was their public service role in the community. You name it, they had a large part to play in about every activity of importance. Two of them married grand-daughters of Mr. and Mrs. William McTaggart, whose original homestead was part of the first townsite of Swift Current.

That we had the Kinetic Club, the founders of Frontier Days, would not have come about without the enthusiasm and push of these three, no doubt about that. I can only explain what they have meant to Swift Current by as briefly as possible to record some of their achievements in their forty years in Swift Current.

In my own 35 years in the newspaper field in Swift Current I would say, without any equivocation, that the names of Aberdeen, Lewis and Des-

Brisay were oftener in The Sun than any others and always to record something they had unselfishly done for Swift Current.

I'm going to record a sketchy history of what they had meant to Swift Current, then draw your own conclusions.

Ken Lewis: Born in Waldeck, son of Blacksmith Joe Lewis, educated there and at Regina Normal and Collegiate. Taught two years at Dunelm, then to Elmwood school here, became principal in 1935. After 13 years moved on to be principal of Central school. For a 13 year period Ken supervised a physical education program for all public schools. He was a charter member of the prestigious Kinetic club, its president 1928-39. He helped plan the beard business, store fronts, etc. which started off Frontier Days as a national celebration. Has served 32 years as a member of the Board, to date. He was president of the Kiwanis club 1952, and in 1969 Lieutenant-Governor of the Kiwanis Clubs, Division 4, in 1969. He was active here in Little Theatre for years and was chosen Best Actor in Provincial Playdown of Dominion Drama Festival once. Ken took part in the National Film Boards "Drylander" film produced here a few years ago. He was a valued member of First United Church, on the Board of Stewards 14 years, Chairman for 4 years. His support of local sports, softball, curling etc., was considerable.

Kem Aberdeen: Kem's dad was a merchant at Rosetown and Sanctuary, later finished his education at Saskatoon Normal School, and taught for five years around and in Lacadena. Taught first here at Central 1931-32, then vice principal at Oman 3 years—same Elmwood 7 years, two years principal at Oman and finished up 22 years to 1966 at Elmwood as principal, when he retired. He was charter member of the Kinetics, its president in 1940-41 in the "Bulldog days" year. He served 32 years as a board member of Frontier Days, was president of Agricultural and Exhibition Ass'n 1968-69, and had much to do with reorganization of the institution to what it is today. Kem was one of a committee of two which brought in names for the Kinetic Club when organized, to follow the Metropolitan Young Mens Club. The other member was teacher Bert Wallace, who later went into medicine and became my own family doctor in Vancouver. Slick with banjo and guitar, Kem played trombone in the Elks Band and worked hard to improve music in the schools. Member of Kiwanis Club, past president of the local NDP association in politics, acted in local Little Theatre, also took part in NFB "Drylanders" film. He served terms on the Saskatchewan Arts Board. Since retirement Kem has been active in United Appeal, Kiwanis World Book sales, and recently returned from a trip to Spain.

Ralph Desbrisay: Winnipeg born, collegiate and normal school at Moose Jaw. Taught 1930 at Grenfell. Was for 8 years vice principal at Central school, principal at Oman 4 years, and 20 years at Swift Current Collegiate, '58 to '60 as principal; 4 years as principal of O. M. Irwin collegiate up to '67. In '68 and '69 helped plan for opening of Comprehensive School and was its Principal. Charter member of Kinetic Club, president 1939-40, in early years was secretary and then chairman for Rodeo. For some years President of Saskatchewan Rodeo Association, served 32 years as member of Frontier Days board and 1966-67 President of the Exhibition. Active in Little Theatre in 13 early years. President of Kiwanis Club in 1962; Officer of World War II Air Cadets and then helped to organize our Boys Band, secretary treasurer

for 10 years, secretary treasurer of Chamber of Commerce eight years, served for years and was also a president of Music Festival.

What about the offspring, Swift Current kids? Two DesBrisay boys. Bill is with Amaco Oil at Drayton Valley; Douglas research assistant, Department of Biology, U. of S., now completing Master's in Biology. The Lewis offspring: Daughters Beverley Ann, Judi and Janet, nurses. Bob teacher now in Holland, prior to that with Defence Dept. Ken, Jr. at U. of S.

Aberdeen's young 'un Jim, started with TCA airlines in Swift Current, and is now supervisor for Dutch Airlines, KLM, at Calgary.

Ken Lewis and Ralph DesBrisay married Peterson sisters offspring of the original McTaggart family, Ken Aberdeen wed an English lassie who had been with the Star-Phoenix daily newspaper in Saskatoon.

And that's the "Three Musketeers" of Swift Current, who have remained close friends and associates for nearly 40 years in Swift Current.

For many years no convention or important gathering, including banquets was ever complete without entertainment from the Three Musketeers, and they were always in demand. They had skits, etc., always ready to entertain—to help visitors appreciate Swift Current.

The S.C. Boys' Band (1)

It may sound far fetched but I think Swift Current reached maturity when the Boys Band (Air Cadets Band) was organized in 1944 by its father, Charles Warren, and in 10 years became such a successful musical organization that it brought resounding publicity for Swift Current, and an immense pride to its citizens. The hundreds of boys and girls (yes, girls) who passed through its roster gained much that was satisfying, wholesome and clean. It was proudly recorded by our police that in the 10 years or so that Charlie directed that band with benevolent discipline, Swift Current for cities 10,000 and under in Canada, had the lowest juvenile delinquency rate. To me that fact transcends even the great pleasure the band gave the city and district.

The story of the band is an absorbing one, and was covered at the time of the 10th anniversary (1954) in a fine booklet entitled "Marching Along Together" prepared by the late George Murphy, then representative here for the Regina Leader-Post and a great band booster. The kids loved him and he loved the kids.

I had been through the band's evolution, but to check for the article I had to reach right out to Lakeland, Florida to contact Mr. Warren who with his dedicated "band widow" wife, Marie, were enjoying their first well-merited retirement trip to the balmy south. So here goes.

The idea of the band originated with Mr. Warren in 1944, after one of the British Commonwealth Air Training schools had been in operation in Swift Current. In conjunction with military activity a local Air Cadet Squadron had been formed. A Mr. Horace Pickup was officer commanding this local boys unit, and Mr. Warren was Equipment Officer. One Sunday in August Mr. Warren, out walking on Third Ave. N.E. with son Dick (now grown to maturity and directing Warren's Funeral Home), suddenly thought he'd like to start a brass band with the boys, and maybe the Air Cadet Committee would help. They walked over to Mr. Pickup's house, and he enthusiastically gave his support—and the band was born.

In September came the actual birth as 15 beginners held their first practice under the baton of Charles Warren in the Physics Lab of the Collegiate. Old instruments were resurrected from attics and cellars and more instruments were donated by the defunct Swift Current Elks' Band. They may have sounded horrible but to Charlie Warren's ears it was sweet music. He was a disciplinarian but a benevolent one and the band quickly progressed. At a subsequent Air Cadet inspection at West End park the new Boys' Band in uniform proudly rumbled through "O Canada," and "The Queen". The unit collected \$60 for the appearance. The Cabri Band, which became as famous as the Swift Current Boys' Band, was present under band master Bill Stephenson, who played the march past. Incidentally, as a matter of history, Cabri's bandmaster Stephenson had been a harnessmaker in Swift Current back in 1909 and played in Swift Current's first band.

Subsequently the band practiced faithfully and often in the basement of Knox Church and then in the old Scout Hall. By 1947 the band took the first of its many latter day trips, to Gimli, Manitoba, where they played with the Western Air Command Band for two weeks and Mr. Warren also improved his technique. In the fall of 1948 the group officially became the Swift Current Boys Band. The complement grew with great community acceptance and parents' help, and he had three bands on the go totalling 135 youngsters. Charlie put in about 25 hours a week with practices for the Beginners, Junior and Senior Bands.

Swift Current and district became very proud of this young band organization. Eventually the Senior band had to its credit six appearances at the famous Calgary Stampede Parade from 1950 to 1955. The band won the top prize four times and second place twice. But the biggest event in the life of the Band was the trip in 1952 to the Canadian National Exhibition at Toronto where the band, in their colorful western costumes with 10-gallon hats were a great success. This story I think, deserves a column by itself.

Through its many years of success, the Swift Current Boys Band had numerous appearances at Malta, Montana. They played at least six times in the International Band Festival at Moose Jaw. In this great event they won the marching competition and the Toddington Shield for top marks, 98, in the festival, and won a class A competition against the Moose Jaw Army Rifle Band. In class B competition they won over the famous Regina Band several times.

Only such a perfectionist as Mr. Warren, the former collegiate teacher, and one with such patience and understanding could have performed the miracle of the Swift Current Boys Band, now such a great asset to Swift Current. He resigned after more than 10 hectic years of tribulation and much joy. After him came Ralph Bauma for a time, then the very talented musician and leader, Dietrich Weigel who also forged much success with the band.

I'll never forget the first public concert held in Knox Church, filled with proud parents and interested citizens. From that time on the band never lacked local support. I was busting buttons too, for my young son was one of the originals, blowing an alto horn when all he had ever known was blowing soap bubbles.

There were many citizens wrapped up in band affairs through the years—fellows like George Bolli, whose big interest in life became those band kids. And one can't forget, of course, Jimmy Culham, the Cabri-ite who became a great Currentite, and a star for years of the Swift Current Indians

hockey team in its intermediate hey-day. He was assistant bandmaster from 1948 to 1955 and contributed his talent as well with a hot trumpet. Strangely enough, both the bandmaster and assistant headed funeral home businesses in the city later.

More About the Band

More about The Band. It was back in 1950, six years after the kids had their first toot, that the Swift Current Boys Band idea flowered into something that was Big League in the Canadian band firmament. Mr. Warren while attending the world famous Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto and sitting in on the great international band festival, concluded that his youngsters were ready for the big time. Anyways it was an idea, which he brought home to Swift Current. This community, of course, was never lacking in enthusiasm for any kind of a local project and this was no exception.

The Lions Club came forward with the original underwriting of an "On to Toronto" fund and started it with proceeds of their carnival of the year. Citizens were caught up in the enthusiasm, and service and other clubs like the Chamber of Commerce quickly rallied. Committees were formed to get the project going. Irving Hansen was named manager of the prospective Toronto trip, and a goal of \$8,000 was aimed at. The Sask. government divvied up with \$1,000. Even Moose Jaw radio station CHAB helped with a string of appeals. The band raised money by playing at Frontier days, concerts, and by August 21 the money was there and the trip was on. All told 91 went on the trip in three colonist cars, a tourist car, and baggage car. It was a memorable trip and the band played at most of the major stop-off cities en route and earned tremendous acclaim for their deportment—and musical ability.

At the CNE the Swift Current Boys Band came third in music in a field of 46 bands and won the Sainthill-Levine trophy for appearance and deportment. The trip was also a howling success when the Band had a number of side trips to Niagara Falls, Waterloo and Acton, Ontario where they played to delighted audiences.

I don't think any visiting band was ever entertained down East like the Swift Current Band was that year. For the first time publicly it is now told how come all the entertaining. Well, my Sun partner Bob Moore and I made periodical trips East to see advertising firms and had struck up friendships with many of the leading Public Relations people there. Bob and I conceived the idea of putting the bee on the PR's and on our next trip East maneuvered some valuable contacts and extracted promises of help.

When the Band went East it was all settled. Among the many functions planned, the kids bussed to Waterloo, Ont., and were guests of the Mutual Life of Canada; at Acton, Ont., they were guests at a big banquet; at Niagara Falls they were entertained by T. Eaton Co.; luncheons and dinners were tendered by the Bank of Nova Scotia, Dominion Bank; the Bank of Montreal took them to an International League ball game in Toronto's Maple Leaf Stadium where they played. The F. W. Woolworth Co. gave them a banquet, and Simpsons-Sears supplied meals packed for their return trip to Swift

Current. It was a trip they would never forget. The Swift Current Boys Band hit the Big Time for good.

It can also be recalled that when the band made its first memorable trip to the Calgary Stampede, they were reinforced by help from Rancher Nelson Gowan, south of the city, who sent horses and his talented cowgirl daughters. Juanita, Shirley and Carmel, with sons Howard and Joe along in full western regalia, to give the band a real western atmosphere. This was all fine publicity for Swift Current.

The majorettes have always played a leading part in the band image and Miss Dora Bowers and Miss Betty Brotherton were among those who did a lot of the training of the girls. And Lloyd Payne and Bill Bowers were among the male young men of great help to Mr. Warren in the formative days of the organization.

I've most likely left out the names of scores of public spirited citizens who helped make the Band what it became, over the years of its existence and to them I apologize, they have had their reward anyway like I did, in the pride they had in helping to create such a great community asset.

Before closing this week, might I just mention the picture on the editorial page in the Sun's March 20, 1970 issue, of a group of sailors on a ship. In the centre, barely visible was a bulldog. Well, that bulldog was Swift Current's pride and joy during the war, and was named "Winnie" after the illustrious Churchill. The group was the crew of His Majesty's Canadian minesweeper "Swift Current", which plied the Atlantic in World War II. The Swift Current Kinetic Club presented the bulldog to the minesweeper crew as a mascot. The Kinetics were so attached to the dog that when he was demobilized, they couldn't give him up, and kept him for some time under fatherly care of local dog-fancier, Hugh Leslie. And this despite the fact they had raffled him off with a \$500 bond, won by Herb Jenkins of Waldeck.

Those were among the kind of things which went on in Swift Current through the years, perpetuated (and perpetrated) by hundreds of citizens who enjoyed doing things different than any other community. The Kinetics were that kind of a club, too, the likes of which will probably never again function in any community. It really was a joy and a perpetual round of exciting things in the Swift Current of yesterday. I hope the newer citizens, and I suspect they will, also go in for zany activities that keeps a community on its toes.

Relief in the 30's

People quite frequently refer to the "Dirty Thirties" in Western Canada. But you had to be in the midst of it to really appreciate what it was like in those days. Swift Current and district had a front ring seat to it all. There are poignant recollections of the aftermath of the 1928-29 Economic Depression to be followed by nature's drying out of southern Saskatchewan, culminating in the severe drought around 1937 when hundreds of thousands of cattle literally died on their feet. The thirsty, dry soil produced nothing. There was wholesale slaughter of cattle and a vast movement like the Exodus from Egypt as thousands of farmers moved away from the Swift Current area with their possessions piled in their wagons to start a new life under subsidized government auspices in northern Saskatchewan. It was very sad

and debilitating to have watched all this at that time . . . and then the miraculous, quick recovery as the rains came and Swift Current district and southwest Saskatchewan again became and continued to be the "Bread-basket of the World."

I forget the exact time in the early 30's that the Worlds' Grain Exhibition was held in Regina. After attending it and getting off the train in Swift Current to walk up Central Avenue from the depot and the sidewalk along the Imperial Hotel simply mushy and inches deep underfoot with millions of grasshoppers. The days of the scourge when housewives couldn't leave washing on the line because the voracious hoppers ate everything in sight. And the few years of dry windy days, weeks and months when verandahs at home had to be shovelled clean several times a day.

Swift Current was right in the middle of it around 1937 at the time of the Greath Drouth. Who was there and didn't remember the long trains of cars of relief vegetables, and farmers' wagons drawn up alongside on Railway Street East . . . vegetables collected and freely given for the hungry western farmers by their more affluent brothers in Ontario and other eastern provinces.

Yes, that was only 30 odd years ago, and I think, the last time farmers of this area had to accept largesse of the kind, to eat. We had heavy relief in the city too, with an unemployed statistic that would be considered appalling today. Yes, we had a temporary soup kitchen set up in the one-storey brick building kitty-corner from the Dominion Express corner of First West and Railway. I recollect that John Hall, accountant at the Great West Ford agency and an alderman became "relief czar". He superintended handling of relief vouchers so some people wouldn't starve. In Swift Current!

And I remember my revulsion after seeing a well known and reputedly well-off farmer of the Beverley district, bring his wagon to the relief freight train and load up with vegetables, and later seeing him come out of Cooper's Store with a full crate of expensive B.C. strawberries on his shoulder. Those were the days. And the vast unemployed trek started at Vancouver en route to Ottawa, stopping in Swift Current and being fed here and holding a mass meeting north of Kirkaldie Garage (which was all vacant down to the corner of Herbert) and hearing the fiery Lancashire lad, Ald. Harry Gibbs to our horror publicly called the Mounties a bunch of yellow bellies. Those were things to remember.

And not everyone now here was here in the 30's when we had a government creosote plant across the tracks in the west end where once was the famous city steam power plant which was forsaken. Here they creosoted telephone and power poles . . . and when it was opened at a big affair the speaker was Minister of Works Bryant of the Conservative Anderson government who predicted great things for the industry. Later it folded and then came the horse meat plant which fed millions of hungry people in Europe in World War II.

In those days folks didn't have transistor radios in every pocket. I remember in the provincial election when the Liberals came back to power and J. G. Taggart, experimental farm's first superintendent, was elected for the Swift Current Constituency. The Sun had Railway Street from the telegraph office to First West roped off by police, and we hired hundreds of planks and trestles from lumber yards. And folks sat out during the night as we gave out election results by loud speaker from my editorial office window. (The Sun was then west of the Imperial hotel) . . . and it

started to rain but nobody cared, sitting out there on the wet planks. We all felt very important. Melhoff Electric joined in our effort and provided the loud speakers. Imagine anyone sitting out in the street today and listening to election results.

And it wasn't too many years before that we had to depend on the telegraph key to enlighten us on sporting events. I remember when the Dandy Georges Carpentier came over from Paris to humble Jack Dempsey, then heavyweight champion of the world—and didn't. The whole town tried to jam into Joe Dempsey's pool room on Central and hear wires read out after each round, rushed there from the telegraph office by messenger. Big deal, but those were the days.

And something a lot of us Currentonians enjoyed nearly every day wandering over to Tom Dohan's office on Central to watch the big "smear game" which was usually played by Frank West, Tom Dohan, Jake Kruse and Bill Glaister whose dray office was adjacent. They played for a buck a game and it used to burn up Jake when Tom would gloat over a victory. Tom was one of the early station agents here, had made a pile in real estate. He liked riding old Jake, a wonderful guy who loved sports and was responsible for one of the first painting businesses in the town.

Yep, it was a great few decades in Swift Current, when a stranger was a guy you didn't know and they were far and few between.

Volcanic Ash Here Too

A little while ago there were some queries to The Sun about the old Van-Kel Cleaners Ltd., which flourished in the 20's and 30's on Railway St. West, opposite the elevators. I can well remember that high hopes were held for this new industry for Swift Current. It started out, of course, as a limited company with a promotional stock-selling campaign, had what appeared to be quite a substantial board of directors. The company was to mine and mill a large volcanic ash deposit, which I always thought was somewhere south of Waldeck.

The product which they mined, then manufactured and marketed out of the Swift Current plant was undoubtedly a good product. Unfortunately, however, the business suffered from the fact that it had to buck cleansers like the old established household product, "Dutch Cleanser." Van-Kel just didn't have the resources to parallel its selling with the many thousands of dollars necessary to advertise and gain a nation wide market. Apparently, too, there was alleged some kind of mismanagement and company money somehow got diverted. But that's a story that may never come to light with some of the original company gone from the scene now.

I remember some of the original directors included Joe Dempsey, Sr., W. W. Smith, H. J. Pidgeon. The president and big wheel of the operation was Bill Vance. Originally a farmer, he lived on Third West. A very articulate, suave, short gentleman, who invariably smoked a pipe with a meerschaum stem.

I remember that there were various local men who later stepped in and tried to save the company and keep operations going after it started to flounder. One was H. J. Pidgeon, of Pidgeon and Newsom mill operation on Railway East. Incidentally, Mr. Pidgeon was a brother of the famous

movie actor, Walter Pidgeon. Then Roy Trumble, who was earlier a clerk with Archie Johnson's Consumers Limited on Cheadle St. West, the building later becoming Thompson Auto Supplies Ltd. Roy Trumble was a real nice guy, later dealt in fuel and lumber and had an office in a little brick building at the southeast corner of what was the big vacant spaces south from the corner of Cheadle and First West. Roy couldn't make it go either, and I think one of the stockholders was Mr. Westlake, local photographer, tried a hand at it too. But it was doomed. Not sufficient capital to keep the plant going.

I don't know how the company got its name, Van-Kel, but the first part must have been for Bill Vance. I have an idea that the Kel might have referred to what was supposed to have been the name of a German chemist who had a hand in the making up of the original formula for the cleanser products. However that's neither here nor there. There was quite a bit of local, and other, money it was said went the way of many stock promotion projects apparently, and the business, although they did market a lot of the product, eventually died a natural death and I don't think any of the subscribed capital ever paid off.

I have been in touch with an old friend, Maurice Hesford of Victoria for some information on Van-Kel, for I recall that he was an auditor in business in Swift Current, was engaged to look into the affairs of the company. I think there was quite a hassle involving stockholders and Mr. Vance prior to Mr. Hesford being called in. However Mr. Hesford moved to Victoria in 1942, taking no records with him and details of the operation are now to him hazy.

From what I can remember, the consensus among knowledgeable business men was that Van-Kel could have become a very useful local industry. The product was excellent but to make money it had to have wide distribution and acceptance by the public via advertising—and that costs plenty.

To fill out this week's dissertation, just thought about one of the popular "gathering places" in the era following World War I when the boys came home, restless. It was upstairs in the building now occupied by Harold Hawthorne's drug store. It was then the Eagle theatre, of course. Here in the outside rotunda, next to busy Cooper's Department Store, a lot of Swift Current's life moved back and forth.

For years in rooms upstairs some of the toughest poker games of the early era were played, and a lot of the ranchers in town for a visit lost or made a bundle. I recall that the notable "Doc" Black, a veterinarian and ball player of the earlier days was considered one of the sharpest of the sharpies. Doc Black for years had a silver fox ranch about where the Civic Centre now is. When we boys came back from the war, we organized what was known as the "Wayfarers Club" on the second floor, and most of our army bonus money was dispersed there. On the top floor the Knights of Pythias held forth. I joined. Initiation nights were hilarious and something to remember. As everyone knew everyone else it didn't matter. Fellows like City Solicitor (later Judge) Charlie Bothwell and Rev. Bill Guy of Knox Church were participating Knights and leaders in the mirth provoking rituals. Ah, those were the days. I remember once after lodge closed about 3:30 a.m. and we were still playing cards when the door opened and the voice of a prominent man's wife yelled, "George, you get the hell home". Nobody was embarrassed but George. Those must have been the days.

The Saga of Bill Cooper

As I often sift through batches of old clippings which are the history of Swift Current, I become more and more convinced that the modern era of the city of today started with a man named W. W. (Bill) Cooper—and that was way back in 1903, nearly seven decades ago. He and his brother-in-law, Ira E. Argue, came down from Medicine Hat to start a little general store on a tiny hillock (long since cut down) just off the corner of Central and Railway East. It eventually materialized into the department store (now Pioneer Co-op) not too many yards away from the original.

It was a momentous year for Swift Current, for it also marked the birth of the Imperial Hotel, the Swift Current Sun and our first doctor, W. H. Field, started the first drug store in a little frame place where the Singer Sewing Machine building now is. In 1905, of course, Doc Field moved the drug store to Central and Cheadle, now Bradbrookes. The population was around 150 when all this happened, but soon increased.

He was quite a guy this Doc Field, whose name will be remembered also as having a lot to do with organizing curling and golf for the community. He even called a meeting up over Charlie Reid's store on Central Ave. back in 1904 to organize the first Masonic Lodge. It is interesting to know that for safety sake nearly everyone in the community those days had a hospital card for the Medicine Hat hospital, and this included ranchers also. This cost folks \$5 each. For any emergency they had to wait for the train to come through and then off to The Hat and hospital. That was perhaps the germ of the present day idea for medical and hospital schemes.

Coming back to Bill Cooper, I would say that he was the progenitor of the modern advertising agency. He employed a number of professional advertising men. Nobody believed in advertising like he did. It made his independent business one of the most successful in Western Canada. During the Depression and Dirty Thirties I can testify that Mr. Cooper didn't get panicky and quit advertising. And that saved The Sun. Mahlon Hutchinson, Bob Moore and I who had taken The Sun over in 1932, managed to pay wages, but the three owners managed to keep healthy only by exchanging groceries for advertising with Bill Cooper. He was way ahead of his time. I have a clipping showing that once Cooper's brought in seven carloads of apples at one time. Seven drays were loaded at a time and driven around the city with a banner on each side proclaiming, "How Cooper buys apples!" And Boss Bill himself with two assistants once unloaded \$4,000 worth of groceries one day themselves, and that money bought a lot of groceries those days.

Many will remember the morning of July 1, 1926 while waiting for the usual Dominion Day parade to start, fire broke out in the W. W. Cooper Dept. store, one of the finest buildings in town. It burned right to the ground. Bill, who was in Moose Jaw, hurried back, and rented headquarters on Cheadle, was open on July 3. On July 5, temporary hardware dept. was opened; 8th notions and dry goods; July 15, men's clothing, boots and shoes; July 17, ladies dept. and by July 24 every department was operating some place and plans went ahead for the fine new store to be built.

Mr. Cooper was an ardent Rotarian, its first president here, and travelled all over the world attending international conventions, always boosting Swift

Current. In the early 20's he was off to Russia. Not too long after The Revolution, he came back and wrote a series of articles on his trip.

A bunch of us made one of our trips to Malta, Montana, to meet with the Chamber of Commerce about improving roads. The Maltans gave us a good time with a big dinner 'n everything. Later in the night we missed W. W. Cooper, and worried about him, (for Malta those days was a real Western joint in every respect) and at 3 a.m. we started out looking for him. Well, we finally wandered into one of the many taverns and there was Mr. Cooper (not a drinker) with his top coat off, buying drinks for Stetson-hatted Maltans and telling about W. W. Cooper Co.—and Swift Current. Tall, good looking, erect, Mr. Cooper was an imposing man and commanded attention.

Even his death had spectacular overtones. He had donated a set of chimes for Knox Church, which were finally delivered I think from Europe, to Swift Current and were being installed. The chimes were to be heard for the first time one morning as the workmen were finishing installing them. Mr. Cooper that morning was at one of the many houses he owned, himself shovelling gravel off a truck for the renovation. As the chimes sounded over the clear, crisp morning for the very first time, Mr. Cooper collapsed and died of a heart attack. It was a very largely attended funeral and among the many mourners were ranchers, farmers, Mennonites from the colonies south of Swift Current who had been friends with him and traded with him for so many decades. Yes, Bill Cooper has left a great imprint on what is the modern Swift Current of today. The W. W. Cooper department store brought in flocks of people from hundreds of miles around—for many years. It was exactly 50 years after the first little store opened in 1903, that the business was sold by his heirs to Pioneer Co-op. Sons Gordon and Alfred would admit they weren't giants in the merchant field like Dad.

"There's a Bluebird . . ."

I think you'd agree that it would be a million-to-one coincidental chance that world famous "Time" Magazine would have two stories on Swift Current individuals in a single issue, and back-to-back on a single page. Yet — it happened. And even tho that issue was December 5, 1949, it's interesting because both were interesting people who many others besides myself knew. Their claim to fame is probably unknown to thousands of present residents of this city.

Just recently a friend in Vancouver, strangely enough, came upon this old copy of Time and sent it to me because it had a story about a Mr. Walter Gurney of Lethbridge. It happened that Mr. Gurney after moving from Swift Current to Lethbridge established a private natural history and curio museum which became continent-wide famous and a great tourist attraction. He, in later years, I hear, beneficently turned it over to the Red Cross. The Lethbridge Herald had printed a letter from a "Prince M. Agbosasa, President of the African Social Circle, 11 Ebipedjo Lane, Lagos, Nigeria" asking for pen pals to exchange correspondence and souvenirs. Walter sent a bunch of Canadian stuff to Nigeria, but never got any curios from his pen-pal, and finally after months of exasperation wrote the Prince calling him a damned crook,

etc. The entire story was so interesting Time gave it 9 inches of space—and that's big league.

Before going into the coincidence, might say that little Walter and Jean Gurney came to Swift Current in 1899 with their sturdy pioneer mother Mary Gurney, who after the old CPR section house burned down, came to cook for and manage the CPR dining hall built where about the depot is now.

They came from Tuxford near Moose Jaw. Later Mary with her little brood homesteaded at Cutbank, southeast of S.C. and then lived on 2nd East. Jean, a very popular clerk, worked in Wigmore's store for many years. Later she married Dalton Hebb, who tickled the piano ivories for the silent movies in the old Eagle theatre just north of Cooper's store. Jean and Dalton are now retired in New Westminster, B.C.

Now, here is the coincidence. After reading the Gurney story, I idly turned the single page and couldn't believe my eyes. Still Swift Current wasn't mentioned, but there was a 10-inch story on a Nurse Elizabeth Clarke of Vancouver who had written the then great hit song "There's a Bluebird on Your Windowsill". Sure, I knew Nurse Clarke, for she had trained and graduated in the Swift Current hospital and there became an R.N.

Carmen Liz Clarke was a shy, brown-eyed girl who liked to play the guitar and write poetry. From our hospital she went to Vancouver's Hospital for Sick and Crippled Children. She got the inspiration for the song this-a-way. One rainy October day a small boy patient tugged at her sleeve and said "There's a bird on the windowsill and he's all wet." She opened the window, pulled in the bird, dried it off and put it up in a box for the night under the boy's bed. Before long she had written a set of lyrics, which you may remember started out as follows:

There's a bluebird on your windowsill,
There's a rainbow in your sky
There are happy thoughts your heart to fill
Near enough to make you cry.

The tune came to her later. Liz couldn't write music but she hummed it over to herself most of one night. Radio station, CKNW recorded it and used it on a broadcast. But she couldn't get a publisher to handle it, and she herself put up \$600 to cover the cost of the first 1,000 records, paid another \$40 to have them distributed to retail stores. Bang! Mellin Music Inc., of the U.S.A. snatched it and at once turned out a quarter of a million sheet-music copies, and maybe you know the story from there on. Liz Clarke being Liz Clarke, announced all royalties from the song would go to children's hospitals. The loud-mouths in this world are not the Great People.

I wrote a whole column in The Sun about Liz Clarke and her rise to fame in that day. From Vancouver she wrote me such a beautiful letter of appreciation, which I still cherish in my scrapbook. Subsequently she made a trip back to Swift Current and it was such a pleasure to visit with such a wonderful person, who could have been rich but preferred to give all the royalties to children's hospitals.

Call me modest or immodest if you like, but here goes for a paragraph in the letter I got from this wonderful person "May I say that your "Thru The Glass" column was one of the nicest write-ups I have ever seen, so human and undramatic, and at a later day will try and send you my appreciation in poetic verse, when the inspiration comes, and that comes very readily when I think of your hospitality and the same city that I first made my

dreams come true by being accepted into training and finishing as a nurse."

Neither of the two stories in Time Magazine of that date mentioned that Liz or Walter had come from Swift Current, of course. But at that time, being an ardent propagandist for Swift Current, I took the opportunity to let all this part of the world know that Nurse Elizabeth Clarke was from Swift Current.

I don't recollect ever seeing that Time issue because in those days Time was a luxury for most people and I was part of most people.

Editors Were Characters

The roots of a Western Canadian prairie town, whatever the size, dig deep. Maybe because those were days of comparative tranquility compared to the tension-creating strife and dissension which dominates most of the newscasts and daily papers these days. I don't claim those days were better altogether, but at least they were not so filled with the fear of the unknown. I think, women absorbed with their home life and responsibilities, perhaps had more time to instill into their children a sense of respect and responsibility for the society of the day. Most of the younger people didn't have to be indoctrinated with misgivings about Vietnam and Cambodia and such things.

But I'm off on a tangent, maybe because at my age I, with many others, have a deep sense of foreboding that all is not well with this world, and is rubbing off on the civilization we had such hopes for. And Canada is part of that world.

What I wanted to start out with this week was the observation that the roots of a community like Swift Current spreads all over the cockeyed universe. If the Swift Current of today isn't destroyed (perish the thought) its present residents and offspring will also wind up all over the place some day.

This column of old reminiscences has prompted seeing and hearing from so many of those of the older days my book is full of names, and some I pick at random I have mentioned before. Why is it that oldtimers love to talk about the old days. Probably for the same reason I'm doing this column. For instance, one of the many letters came a while ago from Mrs. Winnifred Clark, 3rd S.E. At one time she was Sun correspondent for the Swinton district. Her folks came from Fort Erie, Ont. in 1903 and that's only 67 years ago. She married a brother of the now Mrs. Faye Shogan. Their Dad was related to Jack Burger who once had a liquor store across from the Imperial hotel and bankrolled some of our famous brought-in baseball teams when S.C. was really a cow town. I knew Jack well.

I heard for instance, from Mrs. Hulda J. Cox (nee Hulda Hoover) who became a teacher after graduating from S.C.C.I. Her folks homesteaded at Simmie around 1910 (when I came) and then settled here. Where's she been? Well, Hulda has been municipal secretary treasurer of Happy Valley municipality No. 10 with offices at Big Beaver, but now in Webb. I had a call the other day from Mrs. Geoff Mayhew living not too far from me in Vancouver. She was of the Ford family which farmed in Beverley district in the early days. Her voice is still as chipper as a 16-year-old. The late Geoff Mayhew was in insurance and other business in S.C. But the Ford family pro-

duced prominent athletes. Her brother Gene Ford pitched for Detroit Tigers when Ty Cobb broke in; Russell Ford introduced the emory ball when he pitched for the old New York Yankees, and Walter whom I knew well and played a little with, was a well known semi-pro pitcher in the West and for Swift Current. Detroit's Gene pitched against our team here after he retired.

How many remember old E. Georget, the Parisian, who operated the green house on 1st east north of the Healy Hotel, whose stooped figure for years grew flowers for local weddings and funerals. Did you know Mr. Georget grew hemp in that greenhouse. and hemp, you know, is a product used to make things that "turn on" drug users nowadays.

And I think back in oldtimes of newspapermen, the greatest of which in my opinion was A. S. Bennett, who edited the old Herald, offered me my first editorial job and changed my life. Nearly 60 years ago A. S. carried on a campaign (from Swift Current) for a St. Lawrence Seaway, believe it or not, but didn't live to see it come about. I succeeded him on the job. But he went on great bats, and I recall as a young fellow once sitting up with him all night in the old General Hospital as he lay on a cot in the corridor with the D.T.'s, if you know what I mean. But a wonderful fellow. After I left the Herald to succeed Sun's Sam Moore, the Herald editor was a 6 foot 5 inch Mr. Fenwick, a courteous gentleman of the old school with a Van Dyke beard who over 70 still played a mean game of tennis about every day. And old "Mac" McDonald who was a reporter on The Sun, with his old fashioned long moustache and perpetual pipe, who visited everybody in town daily for news. And I had a couple of dandies as social editors on The Sun. One, Borgny Eileraas of Shaunavon, married a Mr. Pearson, advertising manager for Coopers, went to Ottawa with him and since became a respected P.R. type for the federal Department of State and also the Citizenship Department. I still hear from her. Then there was Mildred Holmes, who came from high school to work with me. She married Larry MacDonald of an old time family here. Both now in Ottawa have become nationally known with CBC throughout the years. Her dad was an insurance agent here. I've been proud of both these ladies who got their start on The Sun.

Folks I've run into around the West Coast. Harry and Mrs. Hein who owned the productive farm just north of the city east of No. 4 highway, and combined in earlier days to provide music for dancers . . . Freddie Player, who became CPR agent in Vancouver after Banff, and whose Dad came from Moose Jaw to Swift Current to be yardmaster in the 1st world war days, a delightful, courteous gentleman . . . Mrs. Erma Heath who was a hospital supervisor in Swift Current years ago, later supervising senior citizens homes in Alberta . . . the other day I met up with Mrs. Dr. Dowsley whose husband practiced in the Healy Booker block, and came here from Abbey . . . Wally Klayholz who runs a drug store not too far away who did the same thing in Herbert years ago, who duck hunted with local sportsmen . . . and not too long ago we had a visit from a Mrs. Kathie Mansfield who was here in the 40's when her husband was stationed with the British Air Force in training here. Les Mansfield is now representing a big British firm in Amsterdam, Holland . . . Jack Grant, son of Mr. and Mrs. Cy Grant, of Fownes and Grant Jewellers, not a little kid anymore but chairman of B.C.'s Workman's Compensation Appeal Board—he is married to the former Jill Buttery, who graduated here, learned Russian and was so employed by the State Department in Ottawa at one time.

Some Came from Brittany

So far my scrapbook shows me I have had appear in *The Sun* already 64 of the series. Glancing through the book I notice with some discomfiture that although I had in my years on *The Sun* written oodles of pieces on the very early days, in this series I had just touched briefly on the very first businessmen of Swift Current, particularly a fellow called Fraser Timms. He had, on east Railway street, the very first store. Thousands of Indians and their papooses had rested on the floor of that store while trading before and during and after the coming of the CPR railway in 1883. For the benefit of newcomers here goes a little lore on this subject.

This was brought to mind when last Sunday we had for dinner a daughter of Hilliard Gregory who had come out from Winnipeg in 1883 to work in the Timms store. In 1893 Hill married Pauline De Chaboyer of Winnipeg, daughter of a Hudson's Bay factor. There were three boys, two girls came along, and three have survived. For historical record so far as Swift Current is concerned I don't think any other family except the Milburns of these dates are around. Mrs. W. Miller (Martha) Vancouver, Belle in Ontario, Joe in Calgary and Fred in Swift Current. I have seen three of them in the past year.

But I didn't know, and had never read of the fact, that among the very first early settlers who came to Swift Current were some from Normandy and Brittany in France. Some 75 of them came over in a batch. But Martha told me that as a child she well remembers that the immigration office was by the tracks on Railway Street. Homestead seekers had to sit out in all kinds of elements to wait their turn, night and day. She recalls her mother telling her this batch was from Normandy and Brittany. Her mother was of French descent too. Martha remembers these people wore the tall conical hats you may have seen in pictures in *National Geographic* magazine.

You've read in earlier articles about Hilliard Gregory. He was the only white man around in the 1885 rebellion days whom the Indians trusted. And, also because he wrote down his thoughts on paper in later days have we now preserved Swift Current historical data much of which is in the archives at Regina. I have some of his memoirs here, and that's why I can relive for newcomers some of the early "business" days here.

Although the CPR reached Swift Current Creek in the fall of 1882 Swift Current as such didn't become a "thing" until about the middle of 1883. The company had picked a site a little east of where it began, but a couple of squatters wanted 10,000 bucks for the townsite, the railway offered 1,000, and in the end Swift Current was located a section west of the original. The construction crews actually got as far as Gull Lake in 1882 but winter put a stop to operations and no trains were run west of Moose Jaw until the spring of 1883.

In the fall of 1882 Frank Fraser Timms of Regina built a little store here and stocked it, but with winter he left, with his brother staying in charge while the railway left a John Lindsay to look after the materials. These two were the only white men left in Swift Current all that lonely winter. However the spring of 1883 saw much activity as construction started with 300 men building office and freight shed, section house, dining hall, and putting in rail sidings. Thus began Swift Current.

Then the Indians began to come and camp here, which increased the

tiny population and it was really lively, according to Mr. Gregory. There were some buffalo still roaming the plains and the Indians sometimes brought in a carcass of fine fresh meat, a welcome change from the usual canned corned beef.

Many of you folks, I'm sure, haven't heard this story from the pen of Mr. Gregory. "During construction, on one occasion, a couple of trainmen were strolling about near the trench being dug from the dam to the roundhouse. A number of squaws with their children were returning to camp and these men tried to talk to them. One, the wife of a chief fell in the trench, 9 feet deep. The children were frightened, ran home and told the chief that the men had pushed her in. The men, frightened, knew there would be trouble, so they hurried back to the cook's bunk house and one crawled under a bunk, but failed to completely conceal himself. The other fellow put on the cook's apron and cap, and wasn't recognized. The Indians, however, hauled the man out from under the bunk and held an open-air court, with the assistance of an interpreter and fined him \$1, and he had to pay the other man's fine too, which he did readily and thought himself pretty lucky."

"Before the roundhouse was completed and a turntable put in, the engines had to be run out on a wye to be turned, and an old chief named Red Pheasant came down from Battleford, a distance of 200 miles just to see the railway and train. They took him on one of the engines when going to turn and gave him a lively run. The old chief became very much excited and danced on the engine all the way, and when he got back to Battleford had a wonderful tale to tell of his wild ride on the iron horse."

(Just an aside)—Little did Hill Gregory in the little Timms' store in 1883 dream that 60 years later two of his sons Joe and Fred would be in that famous Dieppe raid on the beaches of France with flying ships in the air pelting them with bombs. Joe was decorated for bravery in that episode. Hill Gregory himself treasured a medal he had for being in the Fenian Raid (Niagara), an earlier page in Canadian history, before Swift Current was born.

The Palliser Triangle

Last week I wrote of the "original" business men of Swift Current back in 1882-3, and of Hill Gregory, our first "historian" who came to work in Fraser Timms' store, the very first. Hill had the title of acting postmaster therein. The following year Timms sold out to a Neil MacDonald, and of all things Mr. Gregory started a pool hall and soft drinks business in this tiny railway community. However, later when the railway line was built from Regina to Saskatoon, the freighters stopped coming to Swift Current from Battleford and business slowed to a halt. Gregory pulled out, went to Manitoba, later came back here to start ranching, sold out again and moved to Oregon. But he returned, the climate being too wet for him, and started another little store just east of the Swift Current Bottling Works. This great little pioneer, just 40 years after coming to Swift Current was working in the same place (then Hadder's Grocery) in 1923 when he collapsed and died—in harness.

It has been written often that Gregory was the only favorite white man of the Indians and halfbreeds, and in '85 during the Riel Rebellion they were

camped north of town in the spring of that year. They decided to raid Swift Current and kill all the residents, except Hill Gregory, named by them "Wepetuth", meaning "His Teeth". He had a mysterious plate of false teeth in his mouth, a thing they had never heard of. The plot failed, luckily.

It's always a wonder why settlers or anyone ever wanted to try and make a home in southwest Saskatchewan at that time. There were periodic cycles of drouth, short grass, hardly any trees and not too much water. The explorer and investigator, Capt. John Palliser in the 1800's found it so and called southern Saskatchewan and Alberta the Central Desert. It has always been called the Palliser Triangle, an ugly name for years.

Palliser did a 3-year survey for the British Parliamentary Committee from 1857 and found the soil "useless". Oh, yeah? To add to the confusion Archbishop Tache of the East said much of the prairie was unfertile. However, a few years after Confederation in 1867, Professor Macoun of Albert College in Belleville, Ont., joined surveyors from Winnipeg to Edmonton and gave high praise for the future of agriculture in the west. From then on the story is old hat. Then land hungry folks came from the U.S., Eastern Canada, all over the world to settle our plains. And what was once only considered as good waste land, and inadequate farm and ranch land became the breadbasket of the world. And the Swift Current district in later years was thus dubbed.

We of course had periodic catastrophes in southwest Saskatchewan since, mainly from 1930 to 1940, as everybody knows. But no agricultural country in the world could come back as fast and produce so much on a minimum of moisture.

Establishment of the Swift Current Experimental Station in Swift Current had lots to do with finally altering the methods of using the prairie soils efficiently. Bill Cooper's brother-in-law, Ira Argue, who started the Cooper store here with him in 1903, became a member of Parliament for Swift Current and he did a lot of the spade work to get The Farm which was finally established in 1921. Up until I left the city in 1960, the three fine superintendents of The Farm had been Gordon Taggart, Len B. Thomson and Grant Denike, who with their staffs contributed so much to our agricultural know-how. Mr. Thomson became director of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act and made a tremendous contribution, as I have written about before. The Swift Current community has, of course, been nobly enriched by the thousands of Farm staffers through the years.

Reading from Gregory's memoirs, there were no drugs and hippies around those days, but plenty of excitement. After MacDonald's, another store was opened but all got along amicably. In 1884, he writes, seven rustlers came from Montana and camped about 5 miles out south, came in for supplies and said they were looking for stray cattle. The R.N.W.M.P. kept a wary eye on them but a few days later a squad of Mounties with two 4-horse teams came in from Battleford for supplies for the Division. As they arrived here, heavy rainstorms set in the night and the rustlers took nine head of horses, including some of the Mounties' horses.

The Sergeant wired Maple Creek headquarters who notified Havre, Montana. A posse of about 40 cowboys came out to intercept the rustlers, found them camped for the night in a shack at the edge of a bluff. In the morning they came out of the shack and were shot down as fast as they left the shack. The cowboys then took all the horses in and wired Maple Creek

to "come and get 'em." A pretty severe but effective way to keep law and order.

Without Gregory's foresight in writing of the early days here we'd have to be in ignorance of much of the romance of those days. To me it was a great experience to have grown up in Swift Current and as a newspaperman later to have met and talked with many, many of the early pioneers.

Like a Western Movie

For permanent public record (and I understand from Manager Bill Smith Jr., that the Chamber of Commerce keeps a scrap book of these writings) I think it purposeful to give Hill Gregory's own on-the-spot record of what really happened in that oft-times repeated version of the near massacre of the Swift Current population during the 1885 Riel Rebellion. Here goes

In the spring of 1885, when the rebellion broke out, the Indians of this place moved their camp one night to about 18 miles north of Swift Current (That wouldn't be too far from the helium plant) along the creek. Two days later the men all rode in to Swift Current, well armed and their cartridge belts full of ammunition. It looked pretty bad for the town just then. But the Indians said they came with peaceful intent, to get supplies for their families and also what information they could get of the trouble (Rebellion). Frank Fraser Timms did a very unwise thing. He asked them to give an exhibition of their war dance, which they did in front of the stores on Railway Street. They became so excited in the dance that it nearly precipitated a fight, which would have meant slaughter, for the white people were totally unprepared and the Indian showed no mercy in those days.

However they calmed down and the next day returned to their camp, taking with them a goodly supply of provisions, part of which were paid for and part donated.

They had patrols out and intercepted a courier at Saskatchewan Landing, sent from Battleford with despatches. He was an English halfbreed by the name of John Todd. They took him to their camp and searched him but did not find the despatches as he had concealed them in his moccasins. That night the Indians held a council of war and decided to raid Swift Current, and all the white people were to be killed except one man who was a favorite. That was Hill Gregory, the little storekeeper.

But a strange thing happened which prevented the carrying out of the plan. The band of hostile Indians was composed of two tribes, Chippewas and Crees. They had chosen a Cree named Kee-Wa-Tock as their chief. Now one, a Chippewa halfbreed named Ben de Jevland, said he had never had any trouble with the whites and he would not join them in the massacre. Whereupon the chief leveled his rifle upon him saying he would shoot him if he refused to join. Immediately a Chippewa Indian named Totoe leveled his rifle on the chief saying, "Shoot, and you will both be dead." The chief had to lower his rifle, and in the confusion which followed, the despatch-bearing prisoner escaped unnoticed and ran under cover of darkness for Swift Current. Troops then began to arrive and the Indians were brought in and sent down to the reservations at Qu'Appelle, where they remained until peace and quietness was again restored.

A number of prisoners had been taken up north in the Battleford district who were prominent in the massacres that occurred there, and nine Indian

chiefs were brought down by the Mounted Police and passed through Swift Current enroute to Regina, where they were executed. While at Swift Current their meals had to be served to them sitting on the floor, for they would not sit at a table to eat.

The mail route to Battleford was now established and many passengers were carried to and from the north by it.

That's the story. Regarding the above early mail route to Battleford, we had at The Sun a fine photograph of the mail wagon used, and on the front seat was an armed Mountie in a pill box hat of those days, named William Milburn. He later ranched south west of Swift Current, then became Sheriff of the Judicial District of Swift Current. I knew him well as a courtly, soft spoken gentleman and all his family, some of whom I went to school with.

And, I have earlier recorded before that the Chippewa Indian Totoe who really averted the massacre of Swift Current people, is well remembered as a child by Mrs. Martha Miller of Vancouver. He used to, in later years, call at the Gregory ranch and carried Martha pick-a-back. She relates Totoe used to come and have long talks with her dad, exchanging fresh fish for flour, sugar, salt and tea.

Mr. Gregory also relates that in 1883 storekeeper Fraser Timms had established a ferry at Saskatchewan Landing. In that year the old survey of the river lots was obliterated and the land subdivided into quarter sections by a Mr. Brownjohn of Dominion Surveys. It was then thrown open for homestead entry and a Mr. Jessop was sent here as Dominion Land Agent. But, as there were so few entries for the land at that particular time, Mr. Jessop was transferred to another point and the office here closed, and so it remained for some years.

The '76 and Sheep

Much has been written at one time or another about the British colonization company which created the original '76 ranches, one of which was at Swift Current. Here are Gregory's memoirs on this.

"It was in 1888 that Sir John Lister established one of his large farms here, getting 10,000 acres under lease south of the CPR railway which he afterwards purchased from the Dominion government at \$1 an acre. He put up fine buildings, a Mr. Farquhar of Winnipeg being the contractor, and Mr. Webb as general manager. Then Hon. H. Pelham Clinton came from England, bringing with him his farm hands and foreman. Thus farming operations began. (Some place at The Sun is a picture of Mr. Clinton, the aristocrat, sitting on his horse at the ranch on the south side, wearing a Sherlock Holmes visored hat).

"The men were very green, and when set to work putting the machinery and wagons together often did ridiculous things; in some instances putting the hind wheels of a wagon on the front axle and sometimes getting cartwheels on the wagons. The machinery became very badly mixed. But, at length they got under way".

"One year, however, convinced them that agricultural farming alone was not going to pay. So they tried stock, bringing in upwards of a thousand head from Montana and Dakota. They were a splendid lot of cattle and in fine condition, but they brought them in so late they could not provide fodder

for them for winter feeding. But how were they to know in those days? The pasture was good but a very severe winter set in and they found that the cattle would have to be slaughtered.

"They slaughtered 800 head and shipped the beef for Liverpool but it didn't get farther than Montreal, where it spoiled and had to be destroyed (What a corollary we had here around the late 1930's similarly in Swift Current, just fifty years later than that, when Southwest Saskatchewan became a dust bowl and no grass or fodder available for the cattle.) Many in Swift Current will remember the look of thousands of cattle and horses, ribs sticking out, which were herded into here from all parts and many of our farmers were helped to migrate to Northern Saskatchewan. Then many cattle and horses were later slaughtered at the newly established Horse Plant on the south side, to make food to be shipped to hungry Europeans in the Second World War.

"Sir John Lister Kay then converted the British farm business into a stock company and it was called the Canadian Coal and Colonization Company. The name was later changed to Canadian Land and Ranch Company, with a Mr. Andrews as manager. He was a very practical man and as a more successful businessman changed the methods heretofore used. He found the short grass of this part of the prairie more adapted to the raising of sheep. He therefore turned this into a sheep ranch with good results. Then the dread anthrax broke out among the flocks of sheep in 1896 and they suffered quite a loss before they could control the disease."

Many of the men who came out to establish this British complex later became some of our finest ranchers, farmers and citizens throughout all the area around Swift Current, like one of the foremen, Jim Smart at Saskatchewan Landing, William Brunyee, Jack McCallum, William Alexander part of whose land east of the city was incorporated into the Dominion Experimental Station, John Oman and countless others who made southwest Saskatchewan what it is.

When I came to Swift Current in 1910 just off where Oman School is, were the '76 ranch buildings and close by, the farm of John Oman, who was a great sheep man. He had corrals full of them, and we kids used to walk over and watch them.

Among some of the great sheep men who came from Scotland out here, was Bill Martin who raised sheep out at Maple Creek in later years, a very fine gentleman if ever. Bill had sheep dogs which he trained, among the finest, I think, in the world. He performed with them at many of the earlier Frontier Days we had. These dogs were so wonderful with sheep (and such beautiful animals) that eventually he was brought to Madison Square Garden in New York to have them perform. He was in great demand everywhere.

Now back in our time to finish up, and this concerns the ungodly price of beef nowadays. Just riffled through an old Sun clipping by accident for 20 years ago (1950) when an American embargo abruptly halted our exports of beef and livestock. It was feared mountains of beef would pile up, but Ottawa did not panic, they only put on moderate floor prices and there was no cheap sale of beef abroad. As prices eased consumption mounted and housewives then felt they could afford roast beef and sirloin steak again. Canadians then proceeded that next year to eat about 2½ million pounds more of beef each week and a lot of other meats besides. In 1970, at this time, a lot of people are only eating macaroni and such like. There must be a lesson for economists here.

Fosterton—Oil Strike

The day before January 4, 1952, Saskatchewan, and particularly the Swift Current area, was just one big bunch of soil on which one grew wheat of various sorts and grass for cattle. In one day the whole picture was changed and newcomers who see oil rigs in many places can't even realize the electric thrill and excitement that ran the gamut of emotions here on that January 4, 1952. For many months our little city was a continent-wide household word with the expectations that Texas would in time be only a cup of tea compared to the oil greatness of Swift Current.

I have only to look back in my newspaper clippings to remember what happened to Dave Belbeck, my Sun news editor, and myself when the news hit the wire services and news media. That early Thursday morning Fosterton, about 30 miles northwest of here was a very unknown spot on the map. There was only a little frame post office and store, the Pool elevator, the population at that time about a dozen at the most. Hugh and Mrs. Feig ran the store and post office which catered mostly to "Norwegians, a few English and Irish" as Mrs. Feig put it.

At Harry Lowick's farm, four miles south of Fosterton, the diamond drill of an exploration company plunked through the crust and black gold oozed out and at that moment Saskatchewan was on fire. I was in bed with the 'flu when there was a call from Regina and an oil friend broke the news about the "big oil strike". Still sick that night I listened to radio broadcasts from Regina and Moose Jaw describing the terrific tension and excitement in Swift Current. Anyway, Friday a.m. I arose and went down town as Dave and I got ready to drive out to Fosterton. In the meantime we had long distance calls from Eastern Canada and in the States, also telegrams, asking for stories, anything at all on the big strike. I guess it was with tongue in cheek I later wrote a story about that first morning downtown call, just giving you one paragraph. It went like this: "At the corner of Central and Cheadle we met the same old guy picking his teeth; at the Union Hospital the only excitement was an expectant father who was wearing a hole in the old linoleum of the corridor. 'Oil, hell' he said, 'I'm waiting for news.' Busily mopping his brow feverishly he told this reporter, 'this is sure hard on me . . . what was that you said about oil or something, don't bother me'".

It was a beautiful winter day as Dave and I set out for the "biggest oil discovery in the world." The prairies were bathed in sunshine and silent under a blanket of pure white snow, and roads such as they were, were wonderful for January. Enroute we stopped at Success to talk to Mrs. Bill Hetherington who had the store there, and she nonchalantly said yep, folks were a little excited. However when we got to Fosterton there really was excitement and people and it will be a day I long will remember.

The story of the strike was big, CBC had it on its News Round-Up, and the broadcast originated in Swift Current, making American headlines everywhere. A news commentator over Great Falls, Montana station branded it as, "one of the greatest oil strikes on the continent within recent years." The impact of the discovery was even felt on New York stock exchange, where Socony Western shares rose to \$4 over night. The first well on Lowick's farm was named Roseray No. 1, and came in less than three weeks after the well was spudded in. The well "blew in" at 3,070 feet. As Dave wrote this section of the story I note he said, "some idea of the amount of oil the well

may be able to produce can be ascertained by a free flow test Saturday afternoon, showing it spouting at the rate of 900 gallons an hour, and could give 480 barrels per 24-hour day.

Anyway within three days, Fosterton was a virtual mecca. The snow draped field to Fosterton was beaten into ice by the passing of hundreds of cars and trucks, carrying oil men, newspaper and radio reporters and—of course curious sightseers from everywhere.

In Swift Current folks started figuring that Swift Current's population should reach that of Houston or Dallas, Texas, at least within a couple of months. Silly old me wrote an editorial after returning from Fosterton in which the concluding paragraph read thusly: "One never knows in oil. It wasn't until 1938 that the city of Long Beach, Calif., suddenly found out its harbor was sitting atop a 11,000 acres pool of oil and to date 710 pumps have sucked up over \$110,000,000 worth of oil and billions of barrels still down below. Who knows what the future has in store for us?"

Anyhow, the oil discovery at Fosterton, and other subsequent areas in Saskatchewan did mean a lot to the economy of the province and Swift Current district in many ways, though not always discernible.

While the exploratory lease was held by Mr. Lowick, the Crown, (the Saskatchewan government) held the mineral rights, if I remember rightly, land owners where oil was found in Alberta had a better deal.

But they were great, grandiose days for all of us in Swift Current. The amiable Buster Wah who served coffee to the boys at the Venice Cafe had to listen to lots of big talk at the tables for weeks after, I'll tell you. No news was news unless it was OIL those days.

The Ku Klux Klan—Yes

When you read of anti-Vietnam war demonstrations, or other kind of protest demonstrations, or campus disorders in the United States, and to some other degrees in this same Canada of ours, don't think that there were people around in our own neighborhood who couldn't be deluded by radicals or activists in "those were the days." And if I told you that this could have happened right in Swift Current, many of you might be surprised. And you'd probably be a little more than surprised to know that in the roaring twenties there was a Ku Klux Klan enclave formed right in Swift Current.

The Ku Klux Klan, that abomination for a hundred years in the Deep South of the U.S.A., in Saskatchewan, in Moose Jaw and Swift Current? Yes, that organization of intolerance and bigotry arrived in 1927-1928, spread through parts of the province in various degrees through 1929 when The Crash came and then died a somewhat abrupt end in the 1930's.

Why Moose Jaw was picked for the initial onslaught of the KKK is not known, but it had its Saskatchewan birth there with a guy by the name of Pat Emmons. He was a spell binder of the evangelistic type, and so plausible was he and so adept at getting converts to the KKK (and the joining fees of course) that, believe it or not, he held a mass meeting west of Moose Jaw not long after he arrived at which nearly 9,000 citizens attended.

We in Swift Current heard about this phenomenon through the press of course. We wondered how naive some thousands of citizens of Moose Jaw

could be, until, all at once, we discovered that the organizer had been in Swift Current, set up a little enclave and was going to organize the citizens of this prairie little city under the guise of religion to "have one flag, one school, one race and one language." Pat Emmons came in to also make Swift Current a place where they would exclude Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, Jews and of course Catholics.

Apparently the first guy to fall under Pat Emmon's spell and join the Ku Klux Klan in Swift Current was a Mr. Verol Clinite, long since departed from this mundane world. At that time, in 1927, Swift Current wasn't yet any metropolis and the boys were not too long back from the war. Life went on at an even and unperturbed pace. Who had ever heard of marijuana or "pot". We still lifted our hats as ladies passed on the street.

Anyways, one of the many daily gathering places to sit and gossip any time of the day, was "Friday" Gallagher's barber shop in the Healy Hotel.

However, across the street was the then Yager Block (now the Health Region) and upstairs Verol Clinite, who was a chiropractor, had his office. Tall, lean, with a hawk nose, Verol was quite a "dissenter". He was "agin" a lot of things. His dad, Hiram Clinite, here in the early days had been quite a respected and active citizen in civic affairs in the growing little prairie town, and one of the very first organizers of our modern Agricultural Fair. He had built what is now the Swift Current Sun building (then known as the Clinite Block) on First East. Anyway, this Pat Emmons of the KKK came to Swift Current and the first we knew of it was one day Verol Clinite came down to the barber shop from his chiropractic office, as he did often, and came right out and said that the KKK had come to Swift Current and that before long no negro would ever marry a white woman in Swift Current. (We hadn't seen hardly any colored people in Swift Current in decades but that didn't matter), and the Protestants were going to run the show, etc., etc. Of course we laughed until we found out about Pat Emmons and the surreptitious meetings he had held in Swift Current, attended by some picked persons. We never did find out how many.

Anyway, Swift Current wasn't in the Deep South, and the KKK despite their efforts never did make any headway here and the movement died a timely death. The Ku Klux Klan however, was one of the issues in the 1929 provincial election and reasonable Canadians condemned it. There was all sort of pressure put on to get this sordid little group of KKK scum out of the province. But you can tell your grandchildren that at one time, if not for very long, there was a KKK group in Swift Current. Later on a warrant went out for the arrest of Pat Emmons for embezzling KKK funds, which of course came from the pockets of some Canadians who were ignorant enough to be taken in by the Emmons type, under the guise of religion.

But you just can't believe today that there was a Ku Klux Klan mass meeting outside of Moose Jaw one time at which it was estimated some 9,000 attended—some from Swift Current we later discovered.

In the light of what the western world has happening to it in this day and age, it is easy to believe still, that there hardly is a place in the world that at one time or another isn't ripe for intolerance. And that seems to be the curse that is responsible for so much unpleasant history.

The Old Daily Express

Some brief old time notes scrubbed from a box of notes still surviving way out here in Vancouver, but they are pure Currentonia: Mrs. E. Allen of Mervin, Sask., had written me just before the 1955 Frontier Days celebration that she was a'comin in for the reunion that year. Mrs. Allen didn't care if she was 89. Gad, what people! She had come first to Swift Current in 1906 when "there were only a two-plank sidewalk, a one-room school, cowboys and horses around and the race track was back of where Christie Grants is now (Charlie Reid's store)". They homesteaded out of Kyle and had to drive 50 miles for groceries at McKay's store at the ferry at Saskatchewan Landing.

Lots of folks are a fussin' and a-fumin' at the high cost of living. But that isn't anything new. There was quite a parallel to the present situation in Canada apropos October 11, 1950, and Mr. Benson's dislocating the Canadian dollar isn't new either. On October 11, 1950, my lead editorial in *The Sun* reflected public opinion. It demanded government action on the high cost of living, and there was "no sense of relief in the freeing of the Canadian dollar from the U.S. hitching post. At that date the cost of living had risen to the highest point in history. Nothing seemed to be done to help those with fixed incomes, nor the farmers. (Doesn't this all ring familiar today?). The *Ottawa Journal* editorialized that day, "Price and wage controls will come because an outraged public will demand them. The first duty of the government is to the family."

Picked up an old clipping in which it was reported that pioneer farmer Nick Burnham recalled the Land Office being atop Argue and Coopers when he arrived in Swift Current in '09 from England. There was a queue of landseekers stretched up Central way around on Railway Street. There was an all night round of merriment at the Imperial Hotel and he couldn't get any sleep. In the front lobby he saw huge Sergt. Bottley of the RNWMP asleep in a chair, as red faced as his tunic was red.

I guess that in 1912 Swift Current went through its most hectic days. Much memorabilia came when in an old vault at Begg and Hayes law office was discovered a complete file of the *Swift Current Daily Express* for 1912. Just imagine, there were three newspapers in this place at that time. What a joint. One item had it that John W. Ford was on a four-month visit to England. Noticed a name. Sam Lemere of Lac Pelletier . . . well, when Sam died Christmas Day, 1956, it came to light that he had been born in Swift Current in 1891 . . . passed away at the same time was "Ned" Hogg, well known farmer of this area. Ned came out to work at the 76 ranch in 1887, then settled on a homestead 15 miles northeast of town on the east side of Swift Current Creek.

Guess there weren't too many phones around in 1912 because for Pletch's Grocery you had to ask for No. 25. J. G. Maxwell sold Cole cars; ever hear of them? There was a big story one day about Martin and Fee's store at Webb burned; the manager; Harry Shaw was at Piapot playing football. That's the same Harry whose store is still operating here by his son. Harry, when he moved to Swift Current proved a wonderful civic worker through the years, a swell guy.

Those were hectic days alright, in 1912 . . . a Dr. Ravenburg of Chicago dropped in during all the excitement looking for a site to build a hotel and

Chief of Police John Smeaton resigned, so he could fulfill his homestead duties. It was worthy of reporting that Dr. and Mrs. Kelso Cairns had driven "way out to Saskatchewan Landing". A Sons of England Lodge was organized with Rev. Swalwell (Anglican Church) elected chaplain and Dr. Graham as lodge physician (why?)

A 1912 issue announced that a New Second Hand Store was being opened by "McGuire and de Graaf" . . . during July the Dominion Land Titles office here had registered homestead entries for 466 persons and 230 for preemptions . . . at the Unique theatre (now Power Bldg.) they showed a three-reel silent picture of the Wolgast-Rivers fight and they were "remarkably clear". The Swift Current Hardware was selling parrots at \$6.95. In the provincial election that year the Liberals won 43 seats and the Honorable Walter Scott, Premier won the Swift Current constituency seat . . . at that same time Editor Sam Moore of The Sun was elected member for the Pinto Creek constituency.

There was a steam laundry opened in town; (I think it was on about 4th or 5th west) and A. J. Elias advertised a four-room apartment for \$20 a month (smack your lips over that). Knox Church construction started and listen to this: the contract was awarded to a Brandon firm for \$36,000. Grand Trunk surveyors were working locating the line for a branch to run from Watrous to Swift Current.

Ranch News: Manager Sommerville of the Matador Ranch was in town on his way to Texas to bring in 2,000 more cattle to add to the 4,000 already. They were to be unloaded at Waldeck.

Jones Land Company sold 25 feet across from the Bank of Commerce on Central at \$800 a foot, and G. K. McEwan returned from Chicago where he bought 12 Carter cars which were to arrive soon . . . Swift Current had eight banks in operation.

How Come the Ford Cars

I guess the Ford car agency is probably the longest continuous business of its kind in Swift Current today. Henderson's Swift Current City Directory printed and issued for 1916, after we attained city status, lists only the Great West Implement Co., Ford Dealers, at 2nd West and Cheadle. There were two "garages" listed, McEwan, West and Lamm on First West, north of the present telephone office, and W. H. Hodgson on 3rd West, but the latter were not signified as auto dealers. I can recall that McEwan, West and Lamm did handle cars, but maybe not that early in our history as the Ford. I think McEwan's handled maybe McLaughlins or Overlands at one time. I know that in 1923 I acquired a Star coupe there.

The Ford agency possibly had its genesis back in 1908, when the Great Northern Supply Co. brought in employees from the U.S.A., like Ernie Dodds and Frank Bierkamp. The business, where the Healy Booker block later was situated, was one of the town's biggest structures. In one of Swift Current's most spectacular fires, it burned to the ground in 1911. Out of a job, employees Frank Bierkamp, Ernie Dodds and Frank Harder took on an implement line at the northeast corner of Cheadle West and Second West, called the Great West Implement Co., with Bierkamp as manager. They took on the Ford car agency in 1913 and built the present Ford building, originally with cement blocks manufactured by a plant which had opened on the southside.

Through the years Ford cars by the thousands and thousands came out of these premises. Among the many who worked the back shop were Ernie Dodds himself, and fellows like the likeable, rotund Gladstone Kelly, who always had a smile for everyone. Ernie Dodds became a golfing and curling enthusiast, and through the years was an ardent originator and supporter of the Horticultural Society. His house on Second West was always a flower showplace. Ernie was also on the famous semi-pro Swift Current baseball team which toured the States in 1909, and most likely helped to publicize this area and brought a lot of settlers in from those areas within the next half decade. John Hall was for years the accountant at the Ford plant, and played an active part in civic affairs. He was a father of the young man who started Hall's Sporting Goods store. Manager Frank Bierkamp was always a silent, enigmatic fellow, a bachelor through the years here, and I think retained his American citizenship to the end.

Some pot-pourri of past years for the edification of new Swift Currentians: Did you know that in 1957 the reports were all-prevalent that Moose Jaw's CPR divisional setup was to be moved to Swift Current with vast new marshalling yards, etc., in the West End. Unfortunately everyone knew about it except the Canadian Pacific, and nothing materialized; though I think some get-rich-quick fellows bought up property in the west end on that spec . . . Yes, there had been a depression in the Dirty Thirties around our part of the country; in 1936 a loaf of bread went up from 8 to 9 cents, and housewives howled to high heaven . . . in 1946 the romantic old Turkey Track Ranch, with its 12,000 acres went up for sale . . . in 1936 Christie Grants advertised ladies' coats for \$12 . . . one time in 1916, Alf Russell who had a cattle place across the tracks in the far west end, bought three young oxen each of which weighed over a ton . . . that in 1926 a civic delegation of Ald. Sam Davidner (who operated the furniture store where McIntosh's are now), Dr. G. L. Cameron and Mike Reilly went to Regina to urge building of a normal school in Swift Current . . . that as recently as 1946, prime rib roast was selling here for 31 cents a pound.

More pot-pourri . . . that strikes involving CPR personnel in Swift Current are not unknown . . . There was a short-lived CPR strike here in 1908 when roundhouse and other men walked off . . . again a sympathy strike in 1918, when day men worked 10-hour shifts and got 35 cents an hour . . . Then in 1950 there was a CPR strike affecting local employees. Chairman of the Strike Committee in Swift Current was Harry Gibbs, M.L.A. for the Swift Current provincial constituency, the big, fiery Lancashire lad who came here from Moose Jaw after World War I . . . Did you know that when Bill Cooper opened his first little store in Swift Current, there were 20,000 sheep running around about where Oman School is on the southside.

In June, 1938 there was a classified ad in *The Sun*, "Wanted — a girl to work on a farm not far from Regina; must be good with children; wages \$12 a month.

Through the years I've repeated this item in my column, because every time I do, I get a good belly laugh. It was from the *Swift Current Daily* (you're reading right) *Express*, June 14, 1912; there were three papers here, then. "Ladies coming out of post office were harried by some 20 dogs fighting on the sidewalk out in front. Chief of Police Smeaton and Constable Hagley are determined to stop this sort of goings on in our fair town." And

in the social part of that issue the news item that 20 couples enjoyed a dance in the Magic Theatre on Friday night, music being dispensed by a harpist."

Mentioning the Magic Theatre on First East, I can remember once, I think in 1911 or 1912, that the Boston Bloomer Girls were coming to that theatre and we kids were all agog. Can't remember whether they were a ladies' ball team, or just entertainers. I'm hazy on that.

Rombach and Stalin

Like all of Canada and the U.S.A., Swift Current came to be what it is because of many people, of many races, creeds and even colors. Some became richer than others (before income tax appeared on the scene) and some lived, loved, worked hard but were more or less anonymous in the sense they didn't become mayors, aldermen or club presidents, etc. One of these fine people was Pete Fitchar, tailor here for some 44 years, who died not too long ago. He claimed Austria and Yugoslavia before he emigrated to this town in 1925 — and that's a lot of years ago, too.

First job he had was with Isaac Rombach in his little tailor shop on Central near Railway. I must digress to write of this man Rombach also. He came from Russia, and had a hatred of the Czarist regime because of military service and the unholy bloody pogroms against the Jews. Came the Revolution, and Isaac became Swift Current's dedicated Communist. When I edited the Herald he drove me nuts with his letters to the editor. He wanted Canadians to become Communist, too, and he wanted to go back to the Soviet and become a big wheel in the new hierarchy. Folks got sick of listening to him. As I remember it. Bill Cooper (I guess to get rid of him) prevailed on Charlie Bothwell, then federal member for Swift Current, to try and get him a visa or passport or whatever was needed to go to Russia.

Charlie was successful and everyone breathed a sight of relief, and Mr. Rombach sold out and headed for Russia, sure that Stalin would welcome him with open arms and give him a seat in the Presidium.

It wasn't a year after that, Mr. Bothwell started getting smuggled-out letters from Rombach in Russia, begging and pleading to help him get back and out of Russia. Thus ended the saga of Rombach. What happened later, came to light in a letter I received from Rombach, who got back to New York. He had been put to work sweeping out factory floors and couldn't make it any higher. And the food wasn't so good either. And the name Rombach of Swift Current didn't mean a thing to Stalin and the boys. Rombach thought the capitalist life much better for survival, later.

Through the years, Pete Fitchar worked hard and so did his fine son, Johnny, and the Universal Tailors and Cleaners was known as a place where you always got your money's worth. I knew Pete as well as one could know. Pete, who was a quiet fellow, but who when annoyed by sloppy work or something, could really blow his top. He was a good citizen was Pete, in his quiet way, and was always grateful to the country which gave him haven and a good life. If I remember right, as I recall talking to him, he valued most highly the Eagles lodge with its comradeship.

Through the years, following the Russian Revolution, there were quite a few in the district who took every opportunity to latch onto Communism as

their "thing", and became members of the Canadian wing. But mostly it was in periods of stress, like the so-called Dirty Thirties. I think personally, that they were not communists, but just protesters at conditions, if the truth were known.

Some of them were loud adherents of the farmers' cause. Such as when wheat was 31 cents. There was pint-sized Mike McLachlan, a very articulate orator who raised particular hell at every kind of meeting in Swift Current, and red-headed Gordon Green who was a spark plug in the town for years in the active Swift Current unemployed association. He even made the weekly town council meetings a nightmare at times. I recall one overflow unemployed meeting in the city hall. Mr. Green occupied the press table and dared anyone to move him. I sat and made notes in the audience. Fight a wild Irishman? Not on your life. Those were the hectic days in town. And at any farm or protest meeting there was always George Moreland from west of town.

As conditions improved with a better life for farmers in this area and a more affluent society, the pro-Communists here dwindled to a mere handful but I note the odd letter to the editor yet from one local admirer of Communism who has more letters to his credit than a place name in Wales. I know one well known citizen in the 20's and 30's, who was really "agin" capitalism and then some, and kind of led the leftish thinking in Swift Current. But later by sheer ambition and work got into a local business, made a success of it and I don't think he has ever regretted that he has become a capitalist with his own airplane and everything. Who blames people for protesting when society needs jacking up. It's only the arrogant unthinking protesters who like violence as a means to an end, and haven't any answer themselves for what society needs in this strangely mixed up world, that would regress us—not improve us.

Just a thought. How many third generation businesses still exist in Swift Current? Off the top of my head I can think of a few two-generation businesses still operating here, like the McKenzies, the Shaws, the Wigmore's, but I think the only one is Warren's Funeral Home. George Warren, who took over from W. S. Yule, a one time mayor of Swift Current, was succeeded by his son Charles Warren, who recently retired. The business is now operated by Charlie's son, Dick. That's quite a record. Both Charlie and Dick were educated here. Charlie also taught in the Collegiate, and was the father of the Swift Current Boys Band. Charlie in his younger days was quite a marathon runner. The Kiwanis at one time had an annual road race of some considerable miles, and Charlie won quite a few of these events. The finish line always, as I remember it, was in front of the Healy Hotel. We didn't have Cary Grants or Barbra Streisands those days, so we had to be entertained by such mundane things as road races, etc. But it was all a lot of fun.

Mystery is Cleared Up

Not too many people still living in this fair city have resided here around 64 or 65 years, but one person with this record is Mrs. Jim Killen, who incidentally is a daughter of the late Cy Newell, who used to be a well known farmer north of Swift Current. You may remember in an earlier column I mentioned Mr. Newell the man who, in the days when we were all non-believers, maintained that there was oil in them thar prairie soils.

Mrs. Killen has at last cleared up for us the story behind Van-Kel Cleansers Ltd. She has resided in this area since Aug. 14, 1906, when Mr. Newell moved the family here from Strathroy, Ont., and she was six months old at the time. She writes me that her brother-in-law, Elmore McKellar was the man who actually started the company, as he found a clay deposit on his farm just west of Waldeck. It was he who tested it and carried on the experiments, and worked out the formulas for the Old Sol Cleanser and other products. Then when the other clay deposit was found near Duncairn several business men here became interested. The company was formed and as Mr. McKellar and Bill Vance started it, the name came from Vance and McKellar (Van-Kel). Well, what do you know!

Mr. McKellar also manufactured fire bricks, which he had fired at Redcliffe, Alta., (just outside Medicine Hat). These little bricks were soaked in a container of coal oil, lifted out with tongs and would start a fire in the cookstove without kindling wood. Mrs. Killen says she still has one among her souvenirs.

In 1923 Mr. McKellar, Mrs. Killen's sister and family moved to Winnipeg where he went into business on his own and manufactured dry cleaning products, carburetor cleaners and other products under the patent name of "Ultra Modern". In later years he sold out to a Winnipeg company. During the Second World War he was in Ottawa and Montreal, with government projects relating to aviation fuels. Now, isn't that some story about a man who found clay deposits on his farm near Waldeck?

Mr. McKellar, now 85 years old, is still living in Winnipeg, and two daughters and a son reside there. Mrs. Roy Ashby in Vancouver is another daughter.

And the Ashby name sure rings a bell for me—and—for many who lived here in the decades of the 20's, 30's and 40's. Bill Ashby used to be a drayman in the early days if I recollect right and then drove for Dominion Express too. However Bill, a stoutish Englishman who everybody in town liked, had a booming voice that really boomed and he loved hockey, in the days when the Swift Current Indians dominated the Western Canadian intermediate scene. When he rooted at a hockey game in the old Citizens Rink it always drowned out two or three thousand other voices. An Indian game without the voice of Billy Ashby just wasn't any fun at all, as many will recall.

Things and people one can remember in the era after the first world war started. For instance, there was Albert E. Patey, a tall Englishman who had an employment bureau opposite the C.P.R. depot. The sign included this line, "The Guy What Hires The Ginks." Mr. Patey also included among his activities management of the Lyric Apartments (over the theatre) advertising thusly "European plan hotel, Albert E. Patey, proprietor; rooms by day, week or month, \$1 and up, with bath inclusive." They also had chartered accountants in town at that time, one being Gladwell, Wilson and Co., they were in the Reid Block opposite Coopers. The Supreme Court reporter who took notes of trials in his book was Sid Inch, who was all of 6 ft. 5 at least, and loved a game of poker. The District Court reporter was Tom Patterson, and his address was at "The Fire Hall," a resident volunteer, and many proceedings in after years were also reported by Art Hall, who also worked for lawyers Bothwell and Campbell, up in what is now the Health building on Cheadle.

We had a well known insurance agent with an intriguing name, P. A. Lott, who got kidded a lot (no pun intended).

I don't know when this column will appear in *The Sun*, but I would like to add something to the very worthy reference in the paper recently on the passing of Al Shogan. In his near half century in Swift Current he did so become a part of this community. He was a dear and old friend to many of us, and Swift Current is a much better place for his having come here as he did from Moose Jaw and that event I remember quite well. And it was so fitting to read of a presentation to Miss Edith Alexander, scion of a pioneer family dating back to the old '76 ranch, with nearly half a century of teaching children to become better citizens. And to read of the retirement of Bill Ford from I think 33 years of city service. When I think of Bill, whom I knew from boyhood, I think of what he did for hockey, the beautification of the city, the Boys Band, etc., etc. And some 60 years ago his Dad, John W. gave much of his time and money to promoting sports here, in the same vein. And the retirement from half a century of city electrical service of Syd Stevens, who brings back memories of so many who became solid parts of the community. One thing I can remember, the quiet-voiced Syd was a tough hombre opposite you in a penny-ante game.

Local Strikes in Past

This column is actually being written in Vancouver in the latter part of June, but the postal strike is on and it may be August before this appears in *The Sun*. Incidentally this day is the third time in this week that the "rotating strike" has hit Vancouver, and that made me riffle through old things I had written in *The Sun*. It may be that we can recall, therefore, a railway strike which affected Swift Current in this same month just two decades ago, August 1950.

That strike was the first to entirely tie up Canadian systems, but it was not the first to affect the local terminal. We had one here in 1908 and in 1918, both times the staff of the roundhouse walked out on the job. The 1950 strike had 230 on the workers roll, including two women. The old Rate-payers Hall was strike headquarters and the strike chairman was Harry Gibbs, Swift Current's MLA. The committee was composed of 10 members, one from each of the nine unions involved in the dispute. Strike pay was set at \$2.00 a day and strikers were deducted according to their absences at twice-a-day roll call. They couldn't take any other jobs, and I mention this only because of different tactics which prevail in many cases of strikes today. As I recall it was a very peaceful strike. As a matter of fact during the strike volunteers from among the striking railwaymen worked at helping to build the new Scout Hall of that day.

A few words about the strike chairman, Harry Gibbs. He was a big, crew-cut booming-voiced Lancashire lad, a CPR boilermaker here from the Moose Jaw operation. He served in the same unit I did overseas in the first world war. Transferred here, he soon made his presence felt. He was a loud, democratic "militant", an ardent CCF'r, and got elected to city council where he quickly made his presence felt again, and later was elected MLA for Swift Current to be a vociferous part of the Tommy Douglas team at the Legislature in Regina.

During the 1950 strike I did some research and discovered from old CPR employees about the 1908 and 1918 strikes, and this I reported, in essence. In 1908, before there was even a bank in Swift Current (but this was an important divisional centre of the day) machinists, boiler-makers, pipe-fitters, car-men and helpers left their benches, dropped their hammers, protesting what their unions called "excessively long working hours". Ex-pipefitter, retired John Bell, told of working 10 hours dayshift and 11 hours nightshifts, machinists drawing no more than 35 cents an hour. After nine weeks of negotiations the unions "won and lost" the strike. The work day was reduced, but pension rights were also affected. As far as we ascertained at that time, Mr. Bell was the only one around who had been in it. It was the longest nine weeks in his life he recollected, as there was no strike pay those days.

In 1918, shortly after the close of the war, the round-house and car-man's helper staff again went on strike here, this time in sympathy with the Winnipeg freight handlers. The sympathy walk-out spread in round-houses from Winnipeg to Calgary, making it a regional one, but not enough men were involved (as in 1908) to cause a railroad shutdown.

About this 1918 strike here, we interviewed old time railwayman J. W. Yuill. He said quite a number of local men laid down their tools for 10 days. That strike was settled by negotiation and resulted in many workers losing their pension rights.

Things are different today, as I have found out living in British Columbia where strikes are a way of life and grind on without cease, one way or another, year in and year out reflecting Prime Minister Bennett's highly publicized "Good Life" as maybe a little dubious in context.

In the 1950 strike, for example, I wrote that Chairman Harry Gibbs said that the strike was going along in orderly fashion, that the committee had had 100 per cent co-operation, not only from their own men, but also from railway officials as well. Even company officials at that time couldn't trespass on their own property during that particular strike unless receiving permission from the strike committee and present their credentials. Apparently those days the seeking of injunctions in strikes was not a common thing.

It might be interesting to note that on the page I had the "strike story", on the other side was Swift Current sports news and here is a list of the golf ladies who were drawn to play at Elmwood on Friday, September 1, 1950, with tea to be served after: Selingers vs Gardiner, Leader vs Wigmore, Prescott vs Cail (captain), James vs Latimer, Shaw vs Ironside, Walkinshaw vs Doubleday, Corigan vs McKenzie, Kelly vs Feinstein. And Connie Dennis, who with his brother ran the Picadilly Cafe on Central, was giving leadership for a monster boxing attraction in Citizens rink under the recreation program for boys, pitting local boxers against boys from Moose Jaw and Shaunavon.

Another story coincident to the 1950 strike was that there had been no rationing of any article of food in Swift Current since the strike started. Local grocery men said ample stocks of food still on hand.

Healy Was Big Name

Just culling through some old clippings of stuff I had picked out, I find that in 1912 Aerie No. 1728 of the Fraternal Order of Eagles had 200 members and that must be some kind of a record for a sleepy little town just

awakening. Even Toronto Financial Post took cognizance of our importance, for in a story it pointed out "the town needs a post office badly". But the town was taking on new significance, for Hodgson's Garage was advertising the Liberty-Brush roadster (who remembers that?) for \$630, and Cecil Delves was the star salesman. They promised operation at just a cent a mile for two passengers. That was 58 years ago and I went to school with Mr. Delves' daughter, Mollie, who presently resides here in Vancouver.

There was a big item that 165,876 new homesteads would be available in the prairie provinces this year, and of course that sparked the influx into Swift Current, too.

Out at Stewart Valley there was a meeting at the home of J. T. Stewart to discuss making overtures for a railway branch line out of that district, also a meeting in the Leinan post office on the subject. Well, it took a quarter of a century later, but they got it, though I doubt whether the line is operating now to any extent. I remember the excitement when it was to be built. Coming here to superintend the operation for Calgary's Burns and Dutton company was the famous pro hockey star Mervin (Red) Dutton, who after serving in the first war played for New York Americans of the NHL . . . and he later was president of the National Hockey League for a while. Driving Red to and from Stewart Valley daily was Neil West, whose dad was first mayor of our City. Neil had a garage on First West, and they became great friends. Later Neil was called by Red to live in Calgary to become purchasing agent and his right hand man in the giant construction company. West is now retired there.

That year of 1912 saw jubilation in town as the Express proclaimed on its front page that the water works was now in operation.

Jumping ahead by another four years to 1916 when Swift Current's first Henderson Directory was issued, which put the city in the big league class. Some very interesting things to recall in having another look at that book, now dog-eared by age. Who ever heard of a minister of the gospel as clerk in the Land Titles Office . . . there was Rev. D. G. Cameron, retired cleric, father of Dr. G. L. Cameron, local dentist. We had a Farmer's Non-Partisan League with offices on Cheadle East . . . there was Tom Dohan, who built the first Woolworth store here for the company; Tom had been CPR ticket agent here, then president of Trotter-Dohan, real estate and for a while mill manager of Ford Milling Co. . . people kept active those days.

And the Healy name was a prominent one, as there was of course, the Healy Hotel, for those days one of the most modern in the province. A Healy Barber Shop, a Healy Cafe, a Healy Cigar Stand; Frank Healy was a shipper in the government liquor store of which John Healy was the manager, and then Michael Healy was shown as proprietor of the Carleton Apartments (hotel), and later to be identified with the Eagle theatre.

Great construction ideas were on the drawing board, and the architect firm of Reilly, Dawson and Reilly started a branch office here. There was the Mack Business College under way, to help people learn the business way of life and there was even, beside the local papers, the McNulty-Alverson Press started up to get the remaining printing dollars available. The Dominion Government those days had a "meteorological observer" and "Cap" MacKay, a venerable and fine Scottish gentleman had the duty of operating the box full of instruments at his home in Riverside. In the earlier days sometimes we used to watch him making observations. With so much new construction

the Winnipeg Paint and Glass Co. had quite a substantial brick building way out in the West End.

At this time, and the regime must have lasted for some three decades or so, the arbiter for ladies' fashions, I can remember, as many will yet, was the late Miss Minnie Sinclair who handled womens' fashions for the Cooper Department Store. Miss Sinclair was big league for she used to take periodic trips East to see what fashionable ladies were wearing—and it wasn't mini skirts for sure. "Min" as everybody in town knew her, was as well known as the Prime Minister of Canada. Whether it was bustles or buttoned-up shoes, it was "Min" Sinclair for fashion in Swift Current.

Around 1916 telling the "word of the Lord" in Swift Current were such well known ministers Rev. M. M. Bennett of Metropolitan Methodist, Rev. John Swalwell, rector of St. Stephens, a pioneer of local churches, Rev. Horace C. Speller of the First Baptist, Rev. Rasmus O. Stove, pastor of United Norwegian Lutheran. Dr. Tom Babe was resident in town with the big title of Inspector of Contagious Diseases.

About the Pioneer Co-op

Swift Current has had quite a few success stories since it had its first retail merchandising emporium back in the early 80's, and which I have referred to in earlier articles. But one of the most successful, in my view, must be that of the Pioneer Co-operative Association Limited, based in this city where it has four retail outlets as well as branches at Stewart Valley, Main Centre, Kyle, Gull Lake, Tompkins, Neville, Sanctuary, and Aneroid. To set the theme of this dissertation let's just tell you that they have an unbelievable number of 12,000 members at present, and their total retail business in 1969 was \$6,790,000. These figures, authentic, come from G. A. Doucet, the Secretary-Manager.

I think the Swift Current and district co-op story is one of the brightest in the co-op movement in North America. I know a little about the movement because in between 1957-60, after I retired as Editor of The Sun, I took over a Public Relations job for the Association, and met a large number of the dedicated co-op people everywhere in the area, and watched some of its development.

Many who have lived out this way for some years will recall men like Lars Hendrickson, Walter Krinke, Ben A. Howden, Ben Cropper and Ingvald Nelson, most of them real farmer pioneers of this area, especially from out north of the city. It was on July 6, 1936 that Pioneer Co-op was born, and it was during those very lean "Dirty Thirties, the first memorandum of Association was signed by Dr. B. N. Arnason, then acting registrar for Co-op Associations in the provincial government setup. I remember Mr. Arnason as a very fine, friendly gentleman, used to be at many of the meetings I attended.

Anyways, the five above farmers mustered up a few bucks, enough to purchase the old Swift Current Gas and Oil Co. which actually originated in Stewart Valley. If I remember rightly the old S.C. Gas and Oil Company had at one time as operator the late John Grinder, a pioneer businessman here, and it seems to me that for a while Cy Cowan, who came here to play goal for the old Swift Current Indian Hockey team worked for it for a while. Hope

I'm right. Anyways the vision of these five pioneers has now blossomed into a multi-million dollar business with 12 locations.

From its original beginning in the petroleum business, the Co-op went into the store business on 1st Ave. N.W., later building a new store in 1951 at 4th Ave. West and Chaplin Street. In 1953 the association made its biggest move, purchasing the old established W. W. Cooper Department store on Central, a business which was the leading one in Swift Current since 1903. It was the biggest Swift Current business deal ever. The founder, W. W. Cooper, desired disposing of his enterprise to a community-local owned group and the Co-op of course, fitted into this. This store alone does a yearly retail business of one and three-quarter million dollars, still the only complete department store in the city. I think two men who had much to do with this deal were the late George Baker, then general manager and Cort Shaner, scion of a local pioneer farming family and continually identified with the Co-op movement here from its beginning.

In 1961, vision again produced the South Side Shopping Centre, rental units with barber shop, beauty parlor, real estate, insurance, dry cleaners, laundromat, service station, etc. From its meagre beginning Pioneer Co-op with its branch stores now serves an area of 75 to 100 miles. New city farm departments have been added and extended and services now include such other things as TV and radio sales, bakery, foods, drugs, coffee bars, lumber, feed, small machinery, plumbing and heating, propane. Some 200 employees now have a yearly total salary of \$815,000; and in each community the co-op is the largest taxpayer to municipal government. Quite a record, considering that many of us back in 1936 and thereafter for a while, thought Pioneer would be only a hick country store affair. The Co-operative, of course, strives to maintain the philosophy that co-ops are community builders, like others.

An interesting corollary is that from assets of \$725,000 in July, 1936, it had risen to assets of \$1,366,777 in December, 1954. Another interesting fact is that at one time the Co-op had acquired the Yager block (now the Health Region Building) but later they sold it because of recognition of the fact that there were no parking facilities for the expansion which was envisioned. At one early time the Co-op was situated for a while in the Rollefson building on 2nd West.

Through the years Federated Co-op, which has a paternal link with the co-ops has paid lots of attention to the fast growing Pioneer Co-op of Swift Current and district, and one of the men who was around a lot advising was their roving public relations sort of fellow, one Louis L. Lloyd, who had played through the years a big part in the Co-op Union and many other offshoots of the movement in Western Canada. Lou, who now is living at Abbotsford, B.C., was one of a number of Lloyd brothers, an American family which farmed near Webb in the pioneer days. They were nearly a ball team by themselves. One of the brothers is the well known Woodrow Lloyd, who in earlier days taught school in places like Vanguard, and when Tommy Douglas and his CCF came into power, he became Minister of Education, later Premier, and just recently retired as leader of the NDP in Saskatchewan. The Lloyd brothers formed the nucleus of the old time famous Antelope Lake baseball team which gave fits to all western teams including Swift Current.

More About Local Hockey

I think 1950 was still "Those were the days" because most of the guys who were doing the civic chores of betterment were of an earlier era. As I was leafing through old clippings the other day, I saw where hockey was still a flaming issue in Swift Current and in August, too. Bob Dahl, now with a mayoralty record not to be sneezed at, had just been elected president of the Indian Hockey Club for 1950-51, showing even those days Swift Current was his major theme in life.

And this brought me around to cogitating on the kind of manner of citizens who were trying to promote Swift Current by making the Indians a name throughout Western Canada, even if in intermediate ranks. The annual meeting was in August, just about close to this publishing date. The retiring president at that time was the late Carl Holmes, a transplanted easy-going gentleman of Danish ancestry, whose business was meat, cattle, etc. in town. Our Indians were in what was called "The Big 4" league at that time, and Father Murray of the famous Notre Dame College at Wilcox, Sask., was out to put a junior "A" entry in the Big 4. This was opposed by our club's representative Bill Ford on the SAHA, who thought a junior club just wasn't good enough for the Big 4 calibre of hockey, and that theme was accepted.

If you don't know it already, in those days Father Murray was quite a guy and his visits to play his team in Swift Current in the old Citizens Rink, whether the temperature was 20 above or 50 below, were historic. He had an old closed-in truck to transport his beloved boys, and with his big coonskin coat was a familiar figure around here at that time. Father Murray, who could bless you in biblical terms, also could blister your hair with unbeautiful language when he got riled. Rex Beach, famous U.S. author had visited Notre Dame, been so impressed, he donated money to help the poor institution out and wrote a book about Murray.

Anyway, getting back to who ran our hockey a couple of decades ago.

It is interesting to note, as an aside, that expenditures for equipment, players and coach the past season had been nearly \$11,000, but the club still had a small margin profit on operations. I was really interested in a suggestion made by Ron Smith at the annual meeting, that a women's auxiliary might create more interest in hockey.

Anyway, who was to run the hockey club the coming season for the famous Indians of that day? Well, the vice-presidency went to Dr. Cas Wolan. Cas had been a G.P. in Herbert before coming to Swift Current, later went to New York and has a big practice as a specialist in Saskatoon now. The secretary named was Ralph Sutherland, whose dad ran the Imperial Hotel at that time.

The finance committee was chaired by the late Bert Leader, who was with Fred Ironside at the S. C. Produce Co. Helping him were such well known guys as W. W. (Bill) Smith, Doug Robinson, manager of Eaton's, Hank Millard, still active around here I hear, among others. The players' committee was to be headed by Carl Holmes, and among others helping him were Connie Dennis who with his brother ran the Picadilly Cafe and on the side taught young kids how to do the manly art of boxing rightly; Bus Wah, the impresario of food at the Venice Cafe and Bernard Basing, the wholesale fruit expert.

Looking after the equipment on a committee was an ardent sport fan,

Norman Weiderhold as chairman, I think he was a carpenter; Eric Sorenson, another of Danish background. The programs were to be handled by the busy, busy Bill Ford, helped by men like Jack Rittinger, contractor. Ken Lewis, the long time school principal headed the publicity committee, helped by Ron Standen, who was doing recreational program work for the city schools and Bill Smith Jr. These were all fairly young citizens and they put lots of energy and action into the great old Indian hockey teams.

While on the subject of sports, it was interesting to note on the same clipping I was working on that on Wednesday, Sept. 13, Swift Current's most ambitious amateur boxing program in history was to take place, with Connie Dennis handling the fighting end for the Recreation Board, with proceeds to secure equipment for the gymnasium. There were to be 11 bouts including Scotty Goodman, Moose Jaw's fighting policeman and Satchel Leacock a colored light-heavy from Montreal. Youngsters from the city taking part in the junior events included some who must since be quite adult, including Bill Bruce, Butch Ross, Dean Terison, Roy Grill, Ted Hardin, Brian Kearns, Keith St. Cyr, Dale Klemke, Everett Lett — remember some of those names?

And at the same time practices for rugby football had got underway with practices at Mitchell Field, and exhibitions coming up with teams from Moose Jaw, Gull Lake and Shaunavon.

And another interesting item on the same page, that the local sports had put their cash on the line for the Calgary Stampeders to trounce the Regina Roughriders — and lo and behold — at Taylor Field the Ruffies had plastered the heck out of the foothill football team. In those days the Saskatchewan Roughriders weren't supposed to be as potent as they are today.

And that's what was happening in sport in Swift Current just two decades ago about this time.

Starting Empress Line

Not long ago in Vancouver, I ran into Cyril Stackhouse, who until recently when he retired to live at Calgary, was confidential secretary for 17 years to Fred Mendel of Saskatoon, the now famous art connoisseur, head of Intercontinental Packers Ltd., with plants in Europe and Australia, and who was responsible with large money gifts for the beautiful art centre in Saskatoon.

I knew Mr. Stackhouse well in the old days, for he came to Swift Current in 1911 as accountant with the Union Bank and later held a similar position with the law firm of Buckles, McPherson and Donald in the Healy Booker block. Cyril enlisted, as most patriotic Englishmen of the day did here, with Swift Current's 209th battalion. He went to attend the battalion's 50th anniversary a few years ago. We reminisced quite a bit about the old frontier days of our home town.

One thing he told that I didn't know — that the CBC's famous Washington correspondent for years, James Minifie (now retired in Victoria), enlisted in the 209th at the age of 15 years, lied about his age like a lot of us did. Mr. Minifie's folks, as many know, were well known farmers of Vanguard for many, many years. James M. came off the Vanguard farm to become a Rhodes scholar and his career subsequently had international horizons.

Cyril Stackhouse told me another story of interest, and one which just could not happen today. In 1912 while the CPR roadbed for the Empress Line had been laid, but the steel had not reached there, he was ordered by his manager, a Mr. Nicholson, to start a branch of the Union Bank at Sceptre. So off went Accountant Stackhouse, clutching in his hand a canvas bag containing quite a few thousand dollars in various denominations. When he got to Sceptre there was only one building that looked as if it might hold money, and that was a frame store run by a Rick Lee and a Mr. Nelson. Mr. Lee, for the interim agreed to give Cyril some 6 or 8 feet at the back end. Stackhouse unloaded his cash and set up in business for the Union Bank. Just like that! And that was how the bank was born in Sceptre. He remembers well the farm parents, pioneers of the Sceptre district, of well known sports characters like Bert Olmstead, former Chicago Black Hawk and Toronto Maple Leafs star, and Jimmy Shields, famous in many curling adventures, including the Macdonald Brier.

That early bank in Swift Current had to rough it, I think I have recounted in some of my earlier columns. And the first Union Bank in Swift Current, in the early, early days, had chicken netting to protect the teller from "bandits". And Jake Hysop, first manager there, had a human skull on his desk which was his pride and joy. Those sure were the days.

Little Theatre Talk

As I have mentioned on occasion before, the year 1912 was Swift Current's momentous year, attained manhood in many ways. According to my files, that year in the basement of the new Bilbrough block on Central (where Shaws store is), a company was started with capitalization of \$50,000 to bore for gas, but they were some 40 years ahead of their times . . . that year, it was reported a Chinese entrepreneur built a new cafe at Railway and Central, a two-storied building of brick, I think it still stands there just east of the corner on Railway, that must be the one . . . that year because of immigration and tourists (it says) all CPR trains through town were running two and three sections.

That was the year, too, that the Imperial Hotel went big league putting in seven new pool tables and one for English billiards. . . . the CPR had 300 freight cars, by count, at one time in the Swift Current yards filled with goods . . . there was a big demand for property and building boomed . . . edifices under construction by the "Church of England, the Church of Rome, and German Lutheran."

I ran across an old item that Ben Hutchinson started with the CPR here in 1903. Prior to that he had gone to school here. When Ben made his final run at the throttle of a CPR engine 42 years later, the conductor on the train happened to be an old Swift Current school chum, Jim Barker, whose mother had in the very early days operated the old CPR dining hall here. Ben was the son of a CPR man too, father Henry. I went to school with Frank and Wally Hutchinson, and the latter I met up with not long ago here in Vancouver. Another brother took up printing and became a partner of Bob Moore and myself when we bought out The Sun back in 1932. Such is our history, or a bit of it.

That was the year too, that the Little Theatre was born here and culture came with a bang. I remember every one of the originals, the menfolk particularly being leading businessmen of the day in this stirring community. D. A. Small with a dandy voice was quite an actor, and a bank manager also. Dr. R. A. Hughes was brother of Mrs. Ada Rooney, still I think resident here. He was a dapper, blonde guy, and was the first man I know who tried to teach the school kids, including myself, the game of rugby, and we practiced where the 2nd east collegiate now stands. There was "Ozzie" Osburn, manager of the Bank of Ottawa, a short, rotund, jolly fellow who married a daughter of Mr. Edmundson who had a butcher shop kitty-corner from the Healy Hotel.

Another actor in the first group was Jack Daughtery, the smallest baseball catcher I ever saw and a good one, in the hardware here. C. P. Town was power superintendent, a very handsome Englishman with a beautiful baritone voice; E. E. Delaney, another first actor had a shoe store on Central just south of the corner of Central and Cheadle in company with Mr. Booker who first owned the Healy Hotel.

Of the female sex, actresses included Mrs. Ed McKenzie and Mabel Yager. The Yagers had early identity here, including a CPR telegrapher, a Sheriff of the first Judicial District of Swift Current and built the Yager cottages, northwest of the top of north hill. Loretta Maher was a daughter of John Maher who built the Princess Royal Theatre which brought high class Canadian road shows here.

Stella Hope, now living in Calgary, was from a farm family north of here. She married the famous "Rosie" Helmer who came from down East with other athletes to run semi-pro hockey and baseball in the famous old sport days of this province. Later Rosie was trainer, then kind of manager of the New York Americans, forerunners of the NHL New York Rangers. Then he moved to Calgary, had a poolroom and much to do with early Calgary pro teams. That was Little Theatre of 1912 and for a while on.

Another interesting district item I found in my collection. You know the town of Simmie, not too far south of Swift Current. A fellow by the name of Joe Bird claimed he was the first man ever there, back in 1887. The two great cattle ranches were not far from there, the Matador and '76, so the item claims, and they winter-fed a lot of cattle in the valley junctions of the Swift Current creek or river or whatever you call it. Joe claimed that one winter some 6,000 cattle perished on those lands and their bones were scattered all over for a long while. That's why, he said, they named the creek up that way "Bone Creek". Just a bit of history thrown in for whatever it is worth.

Did you know that when Argue and Cooper built their first store opposite where the CPR depot is on Railway on what was a hill then, this was the Northwest Territories and that there were less than a 100 souls made up this population . . . so his story tells us.

I had mentioned previously and didn't recall his name, one who participated in a July, 1938, first Frontier Days broadcast of old timers which I had something to do with. He was from around Lac Pelletier and was supposed to be the last of the buffalo hunters around here. I now remember him, his name was Pat Trottier, according to an item I since discovered.

First CPR Time Card

It had been suggested from numerous sources, and this had been accepted as a worthy idea by Editor John Friesen of The Sun that these articles be put into an easy-to-read book with each article a chapter. I am now planning on just such a step and hope that the book, which should be moderate in cost, will be available early in 1971 to coincide with Saskatchewan's Homecoming '71 celebration. When the plan is shaped up, there will be announcements in the Swift Current Sun and other media on where same may be obtained. How about that?

So from here on in, I'll do my best to revive some recollections of earlier days that I have missed and from old columns, etc., going back through years of my newspaper experience in Swift Current. It will be hit and miss, but maybe interesting to many. Provided, of course, that Swift Current isn't getting too darn sophisticated to think of the old days.

Had a letter from an old friend, Mrs. Ed McKenzie, widow of the original owner of McKenzie's store (always was somewhere on Central Avenue). She leads off, "Dear Jimmy": (Like old times around Swift Current). Starts off thusly, "I really get riled when some old timers call me and say "write Jimmy, tell him he has been misinformed about certain items. But I have just ignored them." Actually most of my stuff comes from records kept of newspaper items, and perhaps I could be wrong on some. She was referring to an item about a CPR strike here in 1908, and it was said there wasn't even a bank here then. Mrs. McKenzie says there was a bank here in 1906, The Union, a cement building south of Christie Grants then Charlie Reid's store. The manager was Jake Hyslop. I've mentioned him before. The junior in the bank was Art Webber, whom I knew well as he became a Mayor of Swift Current. In '08 or '09 to the staff came Roy Graham. Well, Roy went overseas as a major with the 209th, was badly wounded, became M.P. for Swift Current in later years and then later a Supreme Court judge. Susie, you've got a great memory. I knew these men also, but you were here before my time. In an item I had in The Sun on Aug. 31, 1951, I got my information about the bank from a retired CPR man, John Bell.

Might as well cull thru a few more CPR items of those days. The first appearance on this section of a CPR time card was in 1882. That time the Indian Head subdivision from Broadview through Regina to Moose Jaw went into operation. Then that December from Moose Jaw to Swift Current was added.

In the Aug. 20, 1970 issue of The Sun there was (to me) a terrible picture of the pioneer Red River Cart and monument which marked the historic old Battleford trail out of here, just over the north hill on Central Avenue. It has shamefully gone to pot and ruin—and with '71 Homecoming looming on the horizon. I'm ashamed. History is still history. It once was a humble, but lovely monument. In The Sun in Nov. 1953, I wrote an editorial saying that it would be fitting to have a monument to mark the spot for those like General Middleton and the troops who disembarked here in '85 and started the overland journey to Duck Lake and other famous places of the Riel Rebellion. Even P. M. Trudeau, our swinging P.M. had a stamp made to commemorate Riel (whom we hanged). Now the Swift Current monument has been allowed to become a decrepit, old piece of junk. Too bad. Feel kinda

sorry that I plugged for this bit of Swift Current history. It should always be a reminder to youngsters that Canadians didn't always travel in jalopies and Chevies.

More memorabilia from clippings I have. I remember the late Nick Burnham wrote me that when he came here from England in 1909, he was appalled at the wooden sidewalks and the terrible mud which made the Swift Current streets. He used to stand at the old corral which became the Healy Hotel. He used to watch the oxen and horses tied up there as homesteaders were in from 80 to 100 miles to pile up with food and fuel for winter. I watched this too a year later. He recalled that his farm neighbor, an English school teacher, who had been a choirmaster and organist, once suggested they drive to Waldeck and take the train to Swift Current "for a bit of civilization."

Nick also gabbed about exchanging views on the street with homesteaders from Glen Bryan (now Pambrun), Notre Dame D'Auvergne (now Ponteix), places like Wallard Coriander (where's that?) and the White Mud. He also saw trees in front of the depot, he said, but I never did.

That year The Sun reported Canada had a record; not a single wage dispute calling for a strike in the whole nation. Boy, they never foresaw what would happen in British Columbia decades later.

The Red River Cart

In a recent piece I deplored that Red River cart being eliminated from the historical site over North Hill where the Battleford Trail came into Swift Current. What we should emphasize is that the cart was an integral part of early prairie life, just as the sod shack was. My notes indicate that the Canadian Indian did not develop the wheel or bring the cart to Canada; it was the early French and Scots. The first historical reference to them was contained in diaries of Alexander Henry in 1803. The rutted paths on which Red River carts travelled our prairie regions were everywhere at one time. They were used first by traders and explorers, also by those engaged in hunting buffalo. Brigades of up to 300 carts, with a Metis driver each overseeing three or four was not an uncommon sight.

It might be interesting to know that the carts were made entirely of wood with strips of buffalo hide wound around the wheel rim, and they could not be greased. So the eerie squeaking noise these carts made coincided with eerie winds which must have blown across the uninhabited prairies. It is said the Red River cart shrieks were so hideous that they reverberated for miles and the Indians believed that the buffalo fled into holes in the ground to get away from the sounds.

I still think that Red River cart should be resurrected or remade and set up at the historic site on North Hill. The wheel was a product of ancient Persia, but it also was the start of civilization's progress on the prairies and Swift Current, too.

I recall when I had a letter from J. D. Herbert, Regina, then Director of Historic Sites, asking if I, with Mayor John Friesen (now a Judge) and the late G. C. Thomson, lawyer, would be a group to organize an historic sites committee here, after it had been proposed that the Battleford Trail ending here be symbolized by a rustic style marker and a replica of the Red River cart.

The buckboard, of course came next. I recall also Robert Heron bringing in a book in his family for a long time. It was written by two ladies from Ontario, who settled at Frog Lake, and were captured by Big Bear and rescued by the Mounties. They told in the book of going by buckboard over the Red River cart trail all the way to Battleford, from the railhead at Swift Current. Truly, those were the days. In coincidence with these items, buffalo bones also had a place in history around here. Before he passed on years ago I remember talking with Charlie Reid, one of the early storekeepers on Central Avenue. He used to ship buffalo bones east from here. There once was a big bone pile just north of the River at the Landing. Frank O'Connell once cleared up this bit of history in a letter to me. Around 1890, buffalo hides were in great demand. The Hudson's Bay Raw Fur Trading post at Fort Garry (Winnipeg) offered an enormous price for them. This was in the days of wild life and a big undertaking of rounding up and slaughtering 1,500,000 buffalo. They were in three large herds, one near Swift Current, one at Moose Jaw and, the largest at Saskatoon.

Hides were tanned and made into fur coats and buffalo robes, many of which I remember were used around Swift Current when I was still a boy. Bones were shipped to Eastern Canada and USA, mostly for fertilizer and charcoal, and in refining sugar. Horns were used too in making buttons, combs and knife handles. Prices used to average \$8 a ton. It is said some of the haulers used to water the bones enroute to make them weigh more. Some people, then and now, are just about the same I guess.

Large areas of the prairie grassland were strewn with the whitening bones of several million buffaloes killed by the hide hunters. Prairie fires destroyed some of them.

Yes, the Red River cart and the nearly extinct buffalo should not be forgotten because they were part of the pioneer existence in our early days.

I am indebted to Mrs. Kathleen Friesen of Kelowna, B.C., (nee Dafoe) for correcting an oversight in my column on Pioneer Co-op history, recently. That was about the spade work on this company which was done by the late W. A. (Billy) Dafoe, whom of course I knew like the back of my hand. Mr. Dafoe put his own bucks and much of his time in the negotiations which led to buying of John Grinder's Swift Current Gas and Oil, the progenitor of Pioneer Co-op. Her recollection is that her dad was the first president of Pioneer Co-op.

Supplies Over the Trail

Did you know that prior to 1883 when the first CP train came through here, supplies for Battleford had to come via Winnipeg and a quick round trip usually took 11 weeks. In that year Gordon Marchand blazed a freight trail to Swift Current and started the first weekly mail service, and freight rates to Battleford were cut 50 per cent. It was four years earlier, as a matter of interest, that the first newspaper The Saskatchewan Herald was born in Battleford, when P. G. Laurie brought a press in by oxcart from Fort Garry (Winnipeg).

More history on this subject I have resurrected. Back in 1953 while on The Sun, I met Solomon Pritchard, who at 93 was living at Cando, Sask.

From 1883 to 1885 Mr. Pritchard had been official guide to Father Fafard and Marchand who were killed by the Indians in the frightful Frog Lake, Sask. massacre as part of the Rebellion activities. Pritchard himself and members of his family were prisoners. He was captive two months. After his release, he related, he hauled freight from Battleford to Swift Current from 1885 to 1905, much of it on the same kind of Red River carts we have been discussing. This was on what was called the old "Swift Current Trail."

In 1910 (the year I arrived here as a boy) Mr. Pritchard moved to the Swift Current district. Thereafter for a couple of years the intrepid man hauled the mail from Swift Current to Notre Dame (now Ponteix). One of the few survivors of the Frog Lake massacre Pritchard to his last days said he could hear the cries of the victims at Frog Lake. Incidentally in 1953—and he must be long gone now I presume—he had 10 children and 40 grandchildren. His father had been born at Rocky Mountain House in Alberta, had worked for the Hudsons Bay Company, doing fur trading with the Black-foot Indians. Such is history.

And many of the old Red River carts had to get across the South Saskatchewan River via the old ferry. To me that (or one of them) old ferry was really a historic thing until the 50's when the provincial government built the present bridge. Over it had passed multitudes of carts, wagons, oxen, cowboys, Indians, Metis. And when the auto came into fashion it was somewhat hellish on a Sunday or holidays to have to wait interminable hours to get across. One of the earlier operators of this ferry was Jim Smart who originally came out with the '76 ranch outfit from the Old Country. Such a wonderful gentleman as I remember him. Then there was a Mr. Hamilton an old English war veteran, an ebullient soul who lived in Swift Current for some years. And then Frank Goodwin who operated it for 31 consecutive years I think. His mother at one time ran the CPR dining hall in the early railway-coming days.

Getting a little closer to our modern era, just as a diversion and as a matter of record. In February, 1933, when Bob Moore, Mahlon Hutchinson and I purchased the Swift Current Sun from Sam Moore the Depression was in full swing. Gee, that's nearly 40 years ago in Swift Current history. Anyways, at that time the Asia Cafe was advertising full course meals from 20 cents up. Johnny (J. E. Friesen) was mayor of the city. A lawyer, he is now a judge if he's still in the land of the living. I can recall that J. A. Rollefson, a former mayor of our city headed a new organization The Ratepayers Association. It was going off in all tangents in an effort to help unemployed. The secretary was Charlie Thoreson, also a Norwegian gentleman who had been secretary of the Board of Trade for years and around 1911 owned the International Lumber Yard on Second West. The new organizers were concerned with "Scrip" which was supposed to be local paper money, but not printed in Ottawa. These were the days, too as I remember, the Scrip was handed out here to help needy unemployed sustain their lives.

Spence From Orkney

I don't think I could come near the end of the early history days without a few words about a homesteader south of Swift Current who became a national figure i.e.: Hon. George Spence. He was a familiar figure on our

streets for years. A tall, redheaded, gaunt Scotsman, he had a homestead at Orkney, south of here. He eventually became a key figure on the political scene, a Liberal. Served in the Saskatchewan cabinet, became a director of the PFRA and then went on the International Joint Commission of which a Canadian, General A. G. L. McNaughton of Moosomin was chairman.

It was about 20 years ago that I once had breakfast with George at a Central Avenue cafe. The following week, he told me, he would join the commission for a hearing at Detroit, Michigan in connection with smoke pollution. Which shows they were thinking those days of pollution, but apparently not getting anywhere either.

George was reminiscing about the early farm pioneer days and he recalled an early harvest season when he and five other farmers couldn't raise a loan to get binder twine. They roamed the main street of Cadillac disconsolately and ran into "Ace" Buckwold, who called them into his store and told them to take as much twine as they wanted, without even a note. He also told me that when he was elected to Parliament in Ottawa eventually, the same Mr. Buckwold loaned him his beaver coat to go in style.—Those were the days.

George Spence was one of the old line Saskatchewan politicians, his name so familiar to Currentonians in the old days, and he used to have great stories of Southwest Saskatchewan's farming transition.

Some old chit-chat: An old 1912 item on Page 1, that J. C. Williams who was homesteading at Tompkins had returned to resume work in Gus Riedler's blacksmith shop on First East opposite the Healy; and that the Misses Bowers were having a fashionable millinery opening above Rooney's Pharmacy. Jack Wood was having his greatest sale of men's suits at \$10; Miss B. Schrader entertained at progressive whist and one of the winners was Dr. Jim Black. (What hot news). Jim, of course, was one of our ball players in the early days, later ran the silver fox ranch about where the civic centre is now.

The year following, 1913, before the First War drums began to roll, at the civic election, dentist Dr. George L. Cameron headed the polls for aldermen. He was high on the totem pole with 273 votes. Such is democracy.

Because I had a letter query, I must shortly hearken back to our first weather observatory here. Now, of course, it's at the experimental station. The first one, even if I repeat myself, was in 1885 when William G. Knight operated the crude instruments a mile south of the depot, then in 1907 it was opposite the depot when it was located near where the Healy Hotel is. And the operator was Bill Vaudrueil later postmaster. In 1912 it was at Dr. Field's home, and a year later at Capt. McKay's. It was taken over I think about 1922 by Alex (Scotty) Shaw. Alex worked for Cooper's a long time, then in the Dirty Thirties, when we acquired The Sun, we took him on, and Scotty drove in a rattly Model T around the country collecting meat, eggs, chicken and butter in exchange for Sun subscriptions—believe it or not—and our staff ate well, at least.

Up until recent years, a later record put out by the experimental station department under the late Dr. Doughy, it was shown our wettest year was 1891 with 24.55 inches, 1915, 23.98 inches and 1927 around 23 inches.

Juvenile Delinquency: Nuttin' new. In a 1909 issue The Sun reported that the Dominion Government was investigating conditions before passing of the Manitoba Juvenile Delinquency Act, introduced at the session of 1908—

in 1916 an item in *The Sun* that a number of 209th Battalion men of Swift Current raided the Lyric basement where a number of bachelors were having a dance. The soldiers turned out the lights on them at 11 o'clock. The same year Black Rust infested a number of district crops.

Another interesting item. In a 1955 issue of *The Sun* there was an old "Bearded" picture of the staff of the power plant on the south side. It was a "new gas engine generating station", to be correct. Our mayor then was Jack McIntosh, now MP for Swift Current. Among the group on the staff was Dan Dojack. He and his wife now living in Vancouver, have become accomplished artists and often show their paintings in Stanley Park. Dan is a brother of the famous football referee of the CFL, Paul Dojack of Regina.

Item in the *Swift Current Daily Express* in 1912, tells of *Toronto Financial Post* reporting a quarter section of land here selling for \$100,000—also that H. Buckwold was leaving for a visit to Winnipeg; he is the father of Sid Buckwold, many times mayor of Saskatoon—a permit to build the Healy Hotel in 1912 was for \$200,000—pretty reasonable, I'd say.

The Anthrax Epidemic

In scanning through the series of articles just casually the other day I found only the odd reference to Dr. W. H. Field, who in the old days was just known as "Doc". I must have been losing my marbles since coming to Vancouver—and who wouldn't—because for folks who have moved to Swift Current in the past 10 to 15 years, it really didn't mean much to hear the odd reference to Dr. Field.

Actually he was quite a guy and deserves more than a casual mention in our history. Until he came here in 1903 after practicing as a young medico in Rosthern and Regina, there was no doctor; folks either had to go to Medicine Hat or Moose Jaw for serious ailments. Short, stoutish, Doc Field didn't look like anyone who would like sports. But he was the First President of Elmwood golf club, helped to lay out the first 9-holer east and south of the present links near the Chaplin highway.

Old Doc helped organize the First curling club, a two-sheeter north of the old Cooper rink on Fifth East. When Hon. Walter Scott, Premier of Saskatchewan presented the first curling trophy (he was member for this constituency) Doc Field won it the first year. Old Doc built the First Drug Store here. He served on the first Town Council and first School Board. Served eight years as alderman and a term as Mayor. He had another historic record; in 1917 came the annual Ratepayers meeting. Who turned up? Only old "Mac" MacDonald, *Sun* reporter and Doc Field, believe it or not. Another first, he attended the inauguration of Saskatchewan as a province, in Regina, September, 1905.

You have to remember that when he came here in 1903 the population was about 150—so records say. So Old Doc Field can truly be called Mr. Swift Current "First". That's what I wrote and called him when he came into the editorial room one day to say goodbye after 50 years, leaving for Ontario to be with a daughter. I guess he felt like I did when I left the old town after 51 years. Those who lived here in the old days just couldn't forget him. He fought too many terrible blizzards to reach people who were sick, to be entirely forgotten.

The new citizenry can't be expected to wander thru old files to learn of the experiences of the Swift Current of, say, 70 years ago, and thus this series has been a mixture of memory, recalling of tales from pioneers, and material I have on hand. Not too many know that at the turn of the century there were some 35,000 sheep of the '76 Company distributed over an area some 75 miles north and south and about 25 miles broad along the Swift Current Creek. The old '76 ranch house was of course, south of the CPR tracks here. I didn't know too much about the killing anthrax disease which struck the flocks until October, 1949 when I had a letter from a Dr. Chas. H. Higgins, 100 Hillside Ave., Pearl River, New York.

Dr. Higgins wrote that in September, 1901, he had been sent out to Swift Current by his chief, D. Duncan McEachran of Montreal, then head of the Cattle Quarantine System, and his assistant was Dr. John C. Hargrave of Medicine Hat. He wrote that when he arrived at that time there were eight houses, a CPR bunkhouse, a water tank and the '76 ranch house; only coal oil lamps; no water save that from the railway water tank, the creek and the few wells dug. It was his function as a trained bacteriologist to diagnose the disease and to stop the loss of sheep, spread of infection while waiting for the vaccine to come through.

He wrote that they devised a simple method, which comprised moving the sheep each day to new grounds and not letting them pass over ground that had been infected. This was tough as they had to permit the sheep to go to watering places each day. The 35,000 sheep were divided into flocks of 2,000 each with a herder with his horse and dog. The crew which accomplished the slow arduous task of vaccination numbered 14.

They saw few people on the prairie save the odd Indian. After they had vaccinated the 35,000 sheep of the '76, they had to start all over again as it took two vaccinations twelve days apart. The operation took two months. On the trek their constant diet was lamb, some potatoes and flour to supplement. Dr. Higgins recalled that on the 17th of September, 1901 when they were working near Yellow Lake, south of Swift Current they had a four-day blizzard, and they survived a two foot fall of snow, in tents. On the morning of the fifth day the sun shone, a Chinook blew in and in 12 hours the snow was gone. The origin of the anthrax wasn't determined but it was known some Argentine shearers had been brought in that may have brought in the disease.

At that time he said there was no way of curing anthrax as there is today (1949). He wrote me: "Curiously, since that time there has been no report of anthrax appearing in this area. That the infection was there and drifted towards the creek was proved through finding in the wash, from some 300 carcasses of anthrax organisms which infected gophers, were again recovered and carried on for several generations."

Those were the days. Anthrax did destroy a large number of sheep brought out by the colonization and ranch company from the Old Country but many were saved throughout the wilderness that was the prairies then.

Beavers and Lemons

Wrapping up some recollections again, before this series goes into the planning stage in book form for the Saskatchewan Home Coming '71—some odds and ends. Recently read in The Sun that Judge J. E. (Johnny) Friesen

had been named special assistant to Saskatchewan's Attorney-General. I recall when I returned at loose ends from overseas in 1919 and tried to finish my law studies (unsuccessfully) that Johnny came from Herbert to Begg and Hayes, finally wound up in his own practice. He was a strong determined characterd guy, and I'd say one of the most aggressive aldermen, then mayor, Swift Current has ever had. He always said what he had to say or do without equivocation. A staunch Liberal, he got his reward as thousands others have, with a judgeship but I think he made an excellent one. He was always good newspaper copy with me, was Johnny (as we knew him). A good ambitious citizen of Swift Current thru the years.

Had a letter asking how Mitchell Field got its name. Well, it was named after Dunc Mitchell. We became good friends after he came here as manager of 4X Bakeries. Great baseball fan in the later 40's and helped put good teams in the field here. A stoutish, bald, very ebullient Scots-Canadian, Dunc loved life and people and was everyone's friend. He belonged to a penny-ante group of ours, once-a-weeker. One night playing at one of our houses, he suddenly said he had to go to the office for a little while. It turned out he had been taken ill. An hour later police called—I think it was Roy Hart—to say he had been found dead at his office desk, victim of a heart attack.

Besides the odd little fish, our lil' old Swift Current Creek has been the home for beaver thru the years, long after the Indians left this scene here. I recall that back around 1946 or so, Mr. Steed who was then manager of Cooper's store, and had a place along the creek on the south side, told me that beavers had been pilfering his cabbage patch, storing them up for winter.

The town of Herbert, east of here, was always closely allied to Swift Current for trade and everything. It was basically a German-oriented place. Many of the sportsmen from here went shooting in the fall around Herbert and Rush Lake, and a favorite eating place at Herbert was run by an estimable Chinese man, Wong Gin. He had come there from Maple Creek about 1911. But he had one hobby, raising lemons and oranges in his house. He once showed us a lemon $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches around from end to end, weighing 1 lb., 14 oz.

I was trying to recall the other day how many doctors had practiced in Swift Current from 1903—when Dr. Field came—to about the Second World War. I came up with Field, Hoppin, Kelly, McArthur, Stirrett, Graham, Sharpe, Thurston, Cairns, Burroughs, Ross, Irwin . . . who did I miss? Anyway, so far as I know only ones left in this mundane world are in California, Dr. Roy Stirrett, and maybe Dr. R. A. Ross, the latter who started one of the first large co-op medical schemes in that great state, at Los Angeles, became maybe a zillionaire.

How many remember young John Minor, who after his dad passed on, carried on one of the largest cattle spreads in the whole country at Abbey, northwest of Swift Current. John became known all over the continent for being a pioneer in artificial insemination of ranch cattle. He used to help patrol his large spread in his own planes and later in the flush of his young life was killed in a plane crash. A real swell guy, who was so well known in Swift Current. He had a brother-in-law named Eubanks, who represents the famous Christian Science Monitor, one of U.S.A.'s greatest

newspapers, in Dallas, Texas. Mr. Eubanks used to come up here for Froniter Days, and we became good friends.

And I also recall in the post-pioneer days, that walking up and down Central Avenue would be a tall, grey, kind of saturnine guy named Howard Laidley. He would lean against the old Alexandra Hotel and espouse socialism, and he kind of didn't like me because I used to write agin socialism. Howard came to Maple Creek in 1902 to be a cow puncher, and in later years ranched at The River, north of Swift Current with brother Jim, then moved into the city before he passed on.

We can remember with many happy memories, once we got a real cultural uplift, when the late Magistrate George Thomson, brought a bride to Swift Current. Of course that was when every one knew everyone around here fairly intimately. Capt. George had lost an arm in the Dardanelles, and she had nursed him at one time. Gladys Thomson was an exceptionally tall, pleasant Englishwoman and oriented to music. She was supposed to have been a concert singer too. Some people disagreed as to her voice, but for a while became No. 1 on the local hit parade at functions. Gladys always like to do Her Thing. She had costumes for all occasions. You'd see her striding up Central in a long coon coat and mukluks in winter and carried on her own fashions. Quite a lady. On the front of their house, kitty-corner from Culham's funeral home, she had had fashioned in wrought iron—front and back—a musical bar like they had a sheet music. Musical soirees were the thing.

I remember once George prophecied to me way back when, that Swift Current some day would have 15,000 population. Guess we made it, alright.

Fine Outside Curlers

Before quitting the history of Swift Current proper, should say something about the big wheels from the surrounding towns and villages who used to be such a part of the past days and were so well known here. I can think of some of them, not all. For example, curling bonspiels in Swift Current used to be the big looked-for event all through this area. Some of the great curlers who always brought rinks in, stayed at the hotels, bought their wives and kids presents at our stores and managed to take home quite a few trophies.

I can remember the redoubtable Williams family of Morse, who used to clean 'em up regularly and then went on to Regina and Moose Jaw to do likewise. "Dad" Williams and his sons were great. Gull Lake and Maple Creek had some outstanding curlers, and who can forget Big Mike Bateman who owned the hotel at Cabri and always came in with his rink. From Pennant you could always count on B. M. Hill, the hardware man who was in the bank here in the early days and played on some of Swift Current's outstanding semi-pro baseball teams.

Regular well known visitors in town through the years included the gracious and soft spoken big farmer from Pennant, Dan Gaunt. And Archie Livingstone of Cabri, the tall Scot who brought the first combines into the area on a commercial basis. And storekeeper Max Gitterman of Pennant and Merchant Winograd of Cabri, whose son, now a doctor in Winnipeg has been president of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

And then in the earlier days there was the tall, ebullient Lou Plowman

of Hodgeville, manager of the Beaver Lumber there, who later became a resident here. Lou came to this country as a pro ball player from the old Three-I League in the States. He played a lot of ball around these parts and became a resident manager of Beaver here and then they built their new place kitty-corner from Dominion Express.

From Webb a frequent visitor was Bert Dooks, insurance man, who joined our 209th battalion and lost a leg, had a wooden one. I recall he was in town one Christmas time and I asked him up to our suite in Marylin Court for a drink. Bert deliberately sat down and started to aimlessly turn his wooden leg around and around, while folks sat and watched in horror and nearly lost their meals . . . he loved a joke . . . and the McKay brothers of Webb . . . and "Black" Thiessen who farmed near the Rush Lake sloughs where many from here went hunting every fall and aways choked on the white colored likker he used to distill.

Then there was Tom Graham, first "Master Farmer" so honored by the government in the person of the big Pennant farmer who also was a most ardent Conservative. Yes, we had some well known Syrian family farmers north of Rush Lake, often in town. We used to see Bill Redmond, editor of the Maple Creek News, who turned from Mountie to weekly newspaperman and had one of the first front page columns that really was pungent. And for years the little town of Vanguard had a newspaper, too, with tall Mr. Hodgins as editor. Don't think he ever made any money there, but he had a paper.

Had a letter from Louis Lloyd formerly of Webb at Abbotsford, who recalled the early 20's when Vern Wallace used to promote wrestling here on a big scale. Many like he, belonged to the gym Vern had where The Sun is now. We had great wrestlers operate here like big Al Anderson, who also made his home here for a while. And Carl Van Wurden, the handsome hero whom the ladies worshipped, a regular adonis in the ring. Cyclone Thomson, the bad boy of the era and we often saw in action Jack Taylor, Canadian Champ. Louis recalls Fred Christie who was a middleweight navy champion who boxed here. He worked on Louis' threshing crew at Webb and when he fought in Swift Current the whole crew had ringside seats.

Lou notes that young Reg. Cleveland has had a tryout with the St. Louis Cardinals of the National Baseball League. We knew his Dad, Reg. Sr., who farmed in these parts as did his grandad Big Fred Cleveland.

Odds and ends: Note in The Sun that the Rural Municipality No. 137 of Swift Current doesn't like being annexed piecemeal by the city. Who were the council of the R. M. when S.C. became a city in 1915. Reeve was E. J. Brown and councillors, Div. 1, John Gerding; Div. 2, Joe Carruthers; Div. 3, Louis Briand; Div. 4, T. H. Retvedt; Div. 5, W. A. McPhail; Div. 5, J. L. Keeler, and secretary, Frank G. Shaner.

And talking of the little towns and villages which depended on Swift Current as its "big city", there was Waldeck. I remember when I think it was the Royal Bank had a place of business on the little main street of that village . . . and I'm sure Webb had a bank at one time and a thriving hotel. And Neville was a booming place after the railway got through in 1912; I remember the Bakruds who had one of the first garages there. As for Vanguard, after the steel came in, "Rosie" Helmer and I think Tanny Ross of our big semi-pro ball and hockey teams went out there and opened a pool room and operated it for a time.

Roots of a Pioneer Family

As a semi-windup to this series of reminiscences, published in *The Sun* weekly since March, 1969, and finishing up in book form, I wanted to know what happened in the life of a typical town pioneer family when I came here. Such a family were the Carletons, some of whom I went to school with. It proved interesting. I got the story from Garnet Carleton, long time, respected farmer of Cabri. Garnet tells me, by the way, that he has subscribed to *The Sun* for 45 years "and wouldn't be without it." His father took *The Sun* before he did. Some record.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Carleton brought their brood to Swift Current from Holland, Manitoba, in the fall of 1905, the year the province of Saskatchewan was born. The first winter here the Carleton's spent at the old '76 ranch place on the southside. Subsequently the Carletons built their home on Second East — and it's still there. Old time neighbors, he recalls included the Barbers, Tullys, Wallaces. They came with five boys: Roy, Harvey, Garnet, Leslie, Merrill; two girls: Oriole and Annabelle and all went to school in Swift Current from '05 to '13. Two other boys, Gordon and Percy, were born in Swift Current.

Garnet recalls teachers like the McLean sisters, Miss Pool, "Prof." Latour and among other "kids" at school were such pioneer family names as Cooper, Fetter, Milburn, McTaggart, Gregory, Grinder, Marlow, Borthwick, McNish, Shaner, Briggs, Dempsey, West, Horton. As a kid Garnet said he sold on our streets the Swift Current Sun, Regina Leader, Calgary Eye-Opener.

Fred, when he came to Swift Current had seven brothers, six of whom also came to Swift Current, all homesteaded around here, Neville and Richlea. Pioneers just had to keep busy, so Mr. Carleton did some draying in-between fulfilling his homestead duties. Finally in 1913, he got 320 acres "scrip" land near Cabri and moved his family there.

Well, in tracing what happens to a typical pioneer settler family which came to Swift Current in the early days, we follow a few of the offspring. Take son, Roy, who was a classmate of mine and I played hockey with him; recently passed away. After school Roy went in to learn the electrical trade with Nick Carter (Melhoffs now). Later he helped install the power plant at Leader and much of the wiring of the town. Served in World War I, and for years with brother Harvey had the Ford agency in Cabri. Take Merrill, he became a medical doctor, served in France and Italy in World War II, is retired now after practicing in Winnipeg. Sister Oriole became a teacher, but all the rest were farmers.

Fred Carleton became one of the best known fellows in the Cabri district. He served his community and district well, was either reeve or councilman on the R.M. of Miry Creek for 25 years and gave distinguished service on schools and church boards out there.

Garnet himself, one of the offspring, had three boys and they all farm in the Cabri district and work the original Carleton farm place. The third generation boys, by the way, have their own orchestra and "singing quartet" and are quite well known through Southwest Saskatchewan. They have entertained folks in Swift Current too, some 60 years after their grandpa migrated to the same place. Garnet has retired from farming and now enjoys life in Cabri town.

So, there you have three generations of farmers sprung from that first Carleton family which hit Swift Current in the fall of 1905. The contribution the originals and the offspring have made to agriculture in this district and that of Cabri and other places in this Canada of ours has been incalculable. And the Carletons were only one of the many, many pioneer families who followed in the footsteps of the hardy breed who came in with the railroad in the early 1880's, and later with the '76 ranch, and then those who poured in during the great transition from cattle ranching to grain production.

Many stories like that of the Carletons make up the saga of Swift Current of yesterday.

Whether it was Cabri, Cadillac, Neville, Webb, Waldeck or any of the towns in all directions from here, there you will still find names of those who made Swift Current their jumping off spot, and who in some way were identified with its earlier history.

This Ends Reminiscences

This chapter will wind up the old time history as I knew it. The old history faded out when Swift Current became a city in 1915, with its pseudo 5,000 plus population which it was supposed to have. It is interesting to note that when it got city status, and although it must, as now, have been the fifth city in the province in size, no provincial constituency was named after it. Other little places enjoyed having constituencies named after them, like Hanley, Morse, Gull Lake, Willow Bunch, Melfort, etc. The only connection Swift Current had in political naming was that the editor of *The Sun*, Sam Moore, was elected member for Pinto Creek. I don't recall whether this city belonged to Maple Creek, Morse, Gull Lake, or Moose Jaw constituency, only that when we got a name we were represented by Hon. Walter Scott, who had been the first Premier of the new Province created in 1905.

I got to thinking of all the folks (and folks were families in those days) who lived here in the earlier days, who still have roots in the city. I don't think there are more than 25 odd or so. Let's see if we can remember some of the roots of the old tree. If I leave out any, they must be few and I apologize for my memory. Here are the names I can think of, off hand:

McNeillie, Warren, McWilliams, Marlow, Powley, Rooney, Rutherford, Shaner, Cooper, Cutting (Lundholm), Dickson, Ford, Grinder, Hart, Yates, Moore, Wigmore, McKenzie, Hayes, Booker, Herman, Yager, Kruse, McDonald, McIntosh, Brunyee, Burroughs, Smith (the WW clan), Corbett, Sykes. That's not too many from the many thousands who had been here.

Listed in the first city directory ever for Swift Current (1916), included eight Chinese laundries. There were no automatic washers and dryers then, mom worked at the job of being mother. We had eight banks that year, five barber-shops, six law firms, 3 poolrooms, 3 blacksmith shops. Henry Ford had just begun to roll 'em out. There were four dentists and five garages listed, Buhlers, Great West Implement, Bill Hodgson, McEwan, West & Lamm, Sykes garage.

We had in that first city year five elevators, seven livery, feed and sales stables, 7 lumber yards which reflected there had been a lot of building in the preceding boom years, 12 real estate offices and 9 cafes named, grandiosely: Baltimore, the B.C. Cafe, Canada, Eagle, Healy, Regal, Royal George,

Savoy and Toga. Four tailors answered to the names of Austin Beggs, Grant Hadder, Connor and Spencer.

As a matter of record a few more names and things when we graduated from a town to city, names long gone from the average public memory. Duncan Brown, BA was principal of The High School; C. A. Drimmie, BA headed Central school; G. A. Countryman, BA, at Oman and Robert Thompson (without a BA) was principal at Elmwood. The last three institutions weren't very old yet in matter of time.

Our mayor, and I've mentioned him before, was Frank West and he was followed by T. W. Hutcheson, a fine baritone singer who owned what is now Bradbrooke's drug store. A fellow by the name of Hon. Richard S. Lake was Lt. Governor of Saskatchewan, and Wilfred Jones, a mayor of our town in 1907 was president of the Board of Trade.

In that first year of manhood, our city used reverend gentlemen to advantage. For instance, Rev. John Stilwell, Anglican, was secretary of the Overseas Club and it was sending socks to the boys in the trenches. Rev. Dr. J. L. Nicol was president of the prestigious Canadian Club, which even served meals to members. It was situated in a frame building on the north east corner of Cheadle at 3rd east. "Monty" Moncrieff, who could draw to the button better than any curler I've known, manipulated the curling club affairs. The Agricultural Society, and that was a big deal here those days, was headed by Sam Moore, Sun editor. Wilburton Gould, a courteous and fine gentleman was Bandmaster of the City Band.

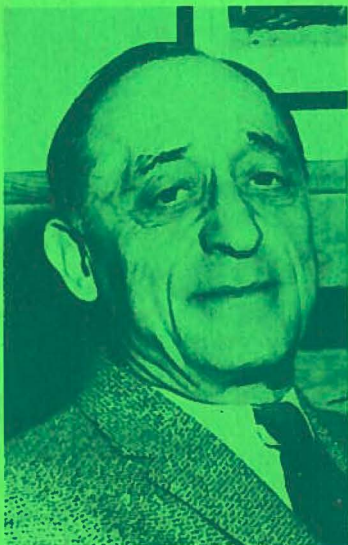
The little city was fitted out with lots of fraternal societies. There was no radio, violent TV or other distractions, so folks used each others' company a lot. That year J. H. Forsey was WM of Masonic A.F. & A.M.; Unity Chapter, GRC had as Z (whatever that was) Nick Carter the genial electrical store man; J. K. Reith, who married into the Princess Royal theatre family (Maher's) was head of B.P.O.E.; and the Rebekkahs were led as NG by Mrs. A. G. Washington.

R. Rosenburger was K.R. & G. of the Knights of Pythias and H. C. Powley, mine host of the Alexandra hotel, was president of the Eagles. The Moose lodge was headed by lumberman Ed. Holsey, and the Loyal Orange Lodge by J. W. Ford, father of Bill.

Our government big wheels included Percy Mugliston as Dominion Lands Agent, John White, postmaster and John Banks the Customs Officer; P. F. Harding (whose two sons later were prominent in the CCF movement) was Registrar of Land Titles; J. T. Dodds, who had taught school here at the turn of the century was Clerk of the Court, and William Milburn who had ridden shotgun with Her Majesty's mail on a buckboard as a Mountie on the Battleford-Swift Current run was Sheriff of the Judicial District.

Because he passed away while these articles were coming to a close, we could not elaborate on the contribution the late Dr. J. P. Whyte made to this community. The Sun in his obituary gave all the details. Jim Whyte, whose friendship I cherished, loved Swift Current and its people and did a tremendous lot for the community, province and nation in the 40 odd years he lived here.

And now, after 56 years as a city, heading into 1971, Swift Current has grown up and I leave it to future historians.



JIM GREENBLAT

About the Author

(From the Swift Current Sun,
February 28, 1969)

The Sun is pleased to announce that beginning March 6, we will be publishing a weekly series of columns covering home-ly recollections of the earlier days in Swift Current, of people who lived in and had to do actively with the evolution of this historical prairie city, from its village and town days into the sixties. The column comes from the pen of Jim Greenblat, who spent over half a century here, coming as a boy in 1910. He spent nearly 10 of those years as editor of the old Swift Current Herald (1923) and the Swift Current Sun from 1932 to 1957.

Jim went to school here, was active in local sports annals, and varied community activities. There are few around nowadays with such an intimate acquaintance with the early pioneers of the city and district.

Mr. Greenblat has been gathering his recollections during the winter. He has

consented to do the series for The Sun as a "labor of love" for the community which became such a part of him. He says the series will not be any gem of literature, but just straight "telling" of the things and people he remembers. He feels that there are now many thousands of new citizens who will be interested and entertained by the little intimate stories of the folks of yesterday, giving some clue to the great progress Swift Current has made to become one of the major thriving cities of Western Canada.

Jim Greenblat, a native of Winkler, Manitoba, where he was born in 1895, came from Winnipeg to Swift Current in 1910. He graduated from high school in 1913, articulated for law with Bothwell and Campbell. At the outbreak of World War I he enlisted, was taken out as under age, then re-enlisted and went overseas with Moose Jaw's 128th battalion and served in France and Belgium, with 46th C.E.F.

He was wounded at the Battle of Lens, later returned to active duty. Mustered out in 1919, he returned to do a year or so at law, found himself too impatient to study. In 1923 he accidentally got into the newspaper business as Editor of The Herald owned by Alex Carey and Gren Corbett. In 1932 he succeeded the late Sam Moore, who had retired as Editor of The Sun. With Bob Moore and Mahlon Hutchinson as partners took over the business in 1933. In World War II he was called to Ottawa to do a series of articles for the weekly press of Canada for the Wartime Prices and Trade Board. Later he joined the War Information Board distributing for them a column for weeklies as part of the war effort.

In Swift Current he served as president of the Rotary Club, was for some years secretary of Elmwood Golf Club and for 32 years was either secretary or a director of the Chamber of Commerce. He retired in 1957 and was made one of the first Honorary Life Members of the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association Division of C.W.N.A., having served as its president one term.

For three years after retiring he was public relations director for Pioneer Co-op during its expansion period, then in 1960 moved to Saskatoon where his son Gerry is an optometrist. Then for nearly four years he was an editorial writer for the Saskatoon daily Star-Phoenix. In 1964 he moved to live in Vancouver, but is now again living in Saskatoon.